

PNA resumes contacts with Hamas

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the opposition group Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) have recently renewed efforts for a political dialogue, Palestinian officials said Sunday.

"There are attempts to renew the meetings," Hamas spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantissi told AFP. "So far, no agenda or timetable or venue has been set up."

"There are no obstacles. Nobody imposed any pre-conditions," Mr. Rantissi added.

Palestinian Communications Minister Imad Falouji, a former Hamas leader, said only that contacts were continuing between the sides.

"The PNA is not against any dialogue, it was the president [Yasser Arafat] who first called for the dialogue, and still calls for its continuation," Mr. Falouji told AFP. "This is not a dialogue between Hamas and the PNA, but a dialogue between all the factions," Mr. Falouji added.

The last meeting between the sides was on Aug. 20 in Gaza.

The primary concern in the talks of Hamas, the main opposition group to President Arafat in the Palestinian territories, is to win the release of its members from Palestinian jails.

Hamas accuses the PNA of bending to U.S. and Israeli pressure to crack down on Hamas by arresting dozens of its activists.

Hamas opposes the peace process with Israel and has claimed responsibility for most of the anti-Israeli attacks that have killed scores of people since Palestinian autonomy was

established in 1994.

The organisation has accused the PNA of making attempts at dialogue only for show, without a real interest in reconciliation. The dialogue efforts were damaged in October when Israel released from prison Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin after the PNA had arrested dozens of Hamas members at Israel's demand.

"We welcome the dialogue but recent contacts have not achieved anything as of yet," Mr. Rantissi said.



An Iraqi guard checks the identity of a driver as he moves into the U.N. compound Sunday. An unarmed rocket propelled grenade slammed into the building on Friday. The grenade was not loaded with explosives and no one claimed responsibility for the attack. Iraq has accused the inspectors of espionage and said it would never permit them to enter about 60 presidential palaces proclaimed off-limits by President Saddam Hussein (AP photo)

Syria urges France to boost European role in Mideast

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria's official press on Sunday called on France to boost the European Union's role in efforts to revive the Middle East peace process, as the country's vice president was to make an impromptu visit to Paris.

"France has already made efforts to reactivate the peace process, particularly with the arrival in power of President Jacques Chirac, and it would be useful if Paris played the role of catalyst for an active and efficient European position," said government newspaper Tishrin.

"Tangible measures must be taken against Israeli leaders to get them to review their policies of aggression and expansion," the paper said, adding that the "solid" relations between Syria and France would help efforts for peace in the region.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks have been stalled since February 1996, with Israel refusing Syrian demands that it return the Golan Heights, which Israel has occupied since 1967.

Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, accompanied by Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa, was due to hold talks in Paris Sunday with French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine.

He and Mr. Sharaa will have a meeting on Monday with President Jacques Chirac, who was in Damascus a year ago as part of a tour during which he said Europe should play a bigger role in the search for lasting peace in the Middle East.

Defendant charged with smuggling weapons to W. Bank offers testimony

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 34-year-old man on trial at the State Security Court for plotting subversive acts and smuggling weapons to the West Bank Sunday said he was a member of a radical Palestinian group until 1992.

Ismat Sbuki is charged with manufacturing explosives in 1995 with the intent of using them against tourists, a charge that could carry the death penalty, and with smuggling weapons to the West Bank from 1995 to 1997 via the Dead Sea.

Two other defendants, Ali Abdul Karim and Mobamad Mubarak, are being tried in absentia on the same charges.

"I was a member of a Palestinian faction until 1992, and during that time I gave some weapons to Ali Abdul Karim upon his request, without knowing that he was exporting them," said Mr. Sbuki, who is pleading not guilty.

The defendant told the court that he was not physically tortured by security forces during his interrogation.

But Mr. Sbuki added: "I was threatened and deprived of sleep for seven nights, so I signed eight empty papers to end this suffering."

"During my detention, the authorities would not let me contact my daughter who had undergone an operation, or my sick mother," the defendant said.

Last month, several prosecution witnesses testified

under oath that they found automatic weapons and explosives in the defendant's house and in a suitcase, which the prosecution is charging belonged to Mr. Sbuki, hidden in the Zaza area near the Dead Sea.

"In 1991, I took possession of two machine guns, which the authorities found in my house, while I was a member of the Palestinian faction," he added.

At the end of the 50-minute session, the defence team asked the court to subpoena four witnesses in the case.

The military court, headed by Judge Yousef Faouri, and including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Fawaz Boqour, approved the defence's request and adjourned the trial to Jan. 7.

Turkish submarine to visit UAE Baghdad urges Arab countries to take firm stand against Ankara

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A Turkish submarine is to make a first visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday, amid conflicting signals over joint manoeuvres by the two navies.

The Turkish embassy said Sunday that the 1,400-tonne TCG Preveze would spend three days at Abu Dhabi's Port Zayed, following a four-day goodwill visit to Kuwait.

While at berth, its commander Bulent Kul will be received by the UAE navy chief, it said in a statement. High-ranking officers and engineers from the UAE armed forces and naval command are to visit the vessel.

The embassy made no mention of previous Turkish statements that the submarine would participate in joint military games with the UAE navy in the Gulf of

Oman. Mr. Kul told reporters in Kuwait on Saturday that the 43-crew submarine would join the UAE in naval exercises, despite denials Friday by the UAE defence ministry.

"We have no plans for joint exercises with Turkey and there are no manoeuvres at all in the Gulf of Oman," a defence source said Sunday.

The Preveze is visiting the Gulf at a time of protests in the Arab World over Turkey's joint naval exercises with Israel and the United States due to start on Monday in the eastern Mediterranean.

Syria, at odds with Ankara over its alleged support for Turkish Kurd separatist guerrillas, has said it is targeted by the exercises. Meanwhile in Baghdad, an official Iraqi newspaper urged Arab states to take a

firm stand against Turkey over its military cooperation with Israel and their joint naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean.

"Warnings are no longer enough," said Babel, a daily run by President Saddam Hussein's elder son Uday.

Conciliatory and firm Arab action is absolutely necessary to show the decision-makers in Ankara what losses they risk by pursuing their policies," it said.

"The Turkish regime has chosen, without hesitation, to adopt a hostile policy toward the Arab World and to step up cooperation with the enemies of the Arabs," charged Babel.

An Iraqi official warned that the Israeli-Turkish-U.S. exercises due to start on Monday posed "a serious threat to Arab national security."

Iraqi diplomat puts blame on dissidents, Israel or U.S. for assassination attempt

AMMAN (AP) — An Iraqi diplomat who survived an assassination attempt put the blame Sunday on either Iraqi dissidents or Israel or the United States.

Speaking a day after a gunman in a passing car shot at him, commercial counsellor Rahim Taher told reporters the attacker aimed to wreck the recently strained ties between Iraq and Jordan.

"They do not want our relations with Jordan to get better or smoother," Mr. Taher said.

Relations between the two countries deteriorated

sharply after Dec. 8, when Iraq executed four Jordanians convicted of smuggling car parts worth \$850, Jordan recalled its charge d'affaires from Baghdad and expelled several Iraqi diplomats. But ties improved some what in late December when Iraq renewed a contract to sell oil to Jordan at below-market rates.

Mr. Taher said he was starting his car in front of his house in Jabal Amman district Saturday morning when a passenger in a car fired a shot at him with a silenced-

equipped pistol. Neither Mr. Taher, 45, nor his 14-year-old son were injured, but the bullet hit the car. The diplomat said he had noticed the same rented car following him last Wednesday.

Asked who were the perpetrators, Mr. Taher said: "Either the Iraqi opposition groups or Israel or the United States."

Iraqi Ambassador Nouri Al Weiss told reporters the attempt was carried out "by some elements who do not want to see any rapprochement in relations between Jordan and Iraq taking

place."

He added: "There are some parties who are unhappy because ties between Jordan and Iraq started to return to normal... They are trying to fish in troubled waters."

Jordan's acting minister of information, Nasser Lawzi, said Saturday his government was treating the affair as a "normal security incident" until the gunman and his driver are arrested.

Jordanian security officials have seized several rented cars answering Mr. Taher's description.

Iraqi refugees in Europe claim responsibility for attack on Saddam's son — Arab weekly

NICOSIA (AFP) — The attempted assassination 12 months ago of President Saddam Hussein's elder son Uday was committed by four Iraqi refugees in Europe with no links to the Iraqi opposition, according to an Arab weekly.

In an article to be published Monday by Al Wassat, one of the refugees said the group planned the attack, which seriously wounded Uday, as their own personal "blow against the [Iraqi] regime."

Responsibility for the attack has been claimed by the outlawed Iraqi Shiite party Al Dawa, while Mr. Hussein himself has blamed Iran.

But the refugee, writing

under the pen-name Abu Firas, denied any contact with the Iraqi opposition or foreign agencies.

"We challenge the Al Dawa party to prove its claim," Mr. Firas told Al Wassat, the weekly supplement to Al Hayat.

He added that "we do not want to be the tool of any foreign party," and said his group kept its plans for the attack "completely secret."

The four refugees, three of whom fled Iraq in 1994, and the fourth who has been living in Europe since the early 1990s, plotted the attack after deciding it would be impossible to instigate a coup against President Hussein.

"We concluded that it was

our duty to launch a blow against the regime," Mr. Firas said.

The group chose to attack Uday Hussein because he "represents the ugliest side of the regime," Mr. Firas said, citing the "arrogance" of the Iraqi president's son and the "blind violence of his acts."

According to the Iraqi refugee, the group obtained false Dutch passports and flew to Cambodia to be "out of the reach of Iraqi intelligence services." There they paid \$30,000 to a police official and "drug trafficker" to give them military training.

Infiltrating into Iraq through Kurdistan, three members of the group then observed the movements of

Mr. Hussein. Two of them, armed with assault rifles hidden in carts reeled from strolling vendors then niddled his car with bullets as it passed in downtown Baghdad, according to Mr. Firas.

"A pretty girl was used as bait. Uday, who was driving in his Porsche stopped to talk with her," Mr. Firas said. The group, including the girl, then fled Iraq and crossed into Iran, he said.

Mr. Hussein, struck by 14 bullets in the attack, has accused Iran of being behind the attack.

He emerged from hospital on crutches six months after the attack, and has since been seen using a walking stick during public appearances.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:00 Holy Koran
- 14:10 Hammerman
- 14:30 French Programmes
- 16:15 Prayers
- 16:30 Believe and Believe
- 17:00 Riding High
- 17:30 The Animal Show
- 18:00 Neighbours
- 18:30 News Headlines
- 18:35 Hope and Gloria
- 19:00 News in French
- 19:15 Ramadan Talks
- 19:35 The Health Show
- 20:01 Over a Cup of Tea
- 20:30 Country Music
- 21:10 Highlander
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:30 Emergency Room
- 23:15 Cosmos
- 24:00 Islam in a changing World

PRAYER TIMES

- 05:10 Fajr
- 06:33 (Sunrise) Doha
- 11:41 Dhuhur
- 14:27 'Asr
- 16:50 Maghreb
- 18:12 'Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich, Tel. 810740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366.

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Aznan International Church Tel. 865897.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 834328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404.

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Weather will be cold and partly cloudy. There will be a chance of scattered showers. Winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers. Winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 05/11

Aqaba 09/19

Deserts 04/12

Jordan Valley 12/17

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 12, Aqaba 20 Humidity

readings: Amman 69 per cent,

Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mokheles Mazharab 820425

Dr. Wissam Hazyayin 748563

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyim 620115

Dr. Munther Al Qraini 779959

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneb 250080

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziyad Jghaitim 992991

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Dept. 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Luzmila 630195

Hussein Medical Centre 81381332

Khalidi Maternity 6442816

Akileh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhagreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09/900560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09/990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 02/275555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02/272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 02/247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital 03/314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 Samaa (RJ)

08:25 Damascus (RJ)

08:35 Jeddah (RJ)

09:15 New Delhi (RJ)

09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 Osaka, Jakarta, Dubai (RJ)

16:20 Cairo (RJ)



KING BESTOWS ISTIKLAL MEDALS: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday bestows Jordan's Independence (Istiklal) Medal of the First Order upon HRH Princess Aisha in appreciation of her contributions to the advancement of Jordanian women and in recognition of her role in the humanitarian and social fields. King Hussein also bestowed the same medal on Princess Aisha's husband, Zeid Sa'uddin Juma'a, in appreciation of his services in the social and charitable fields. (Photo by Mardos)

Item allowing debate on immediate matters reinstated on Parliament agenda

By Fairuz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Lower House deputies Sunday were able to convince Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour to reinstate an item on the sessions' agendas that would give them the right to question the government on its policies regarding matters of immediate concern.

The deputies were upset by their inability yesterday to discuss Jordan's decision to "observe" the Jan. 5 military exercises by Turkish, Israeli, and U.S. navies in the eastern Mediterranean. Despite repeated attempts by a number of deputies to dis-

cuss the matter, Mr. Srour insisted the item was not on the agenda.

The item, known as "current, urgent matters worth discussing," was used by deputies to question the prime minister and his team over pertinent government decisions or to discuss any day-to-day issues of concern.

The item, though not mentioned in the House's internal regulations, became a tradition in recent Parliaments but was omitted with the beginning of the House's ordinary session on Nov. 29.

Mr. Srour told the 80-seat House yesterday that

45 deputies handed him a petition asking the House to reinstate the item due to its relative significance.

"Lately we have been coming to Parliament to discuss simple legislative matters, and to delete a letter here and a word there. I believe the House has a much more substantial role than that," Deputy Mohammad Oran said.

Even though some deputies differed on the technicalities regarding the reinstatement of the item, most of them agreed on its necessity.

"I agree with the deputies calling for the reintroduction of this good tradition, because it

enables us to handle sensitive issues that cannot wait," Deputy Nazih Ammarin said.

In previous Parliaments, each deputy wishing to discuss matters that would fall under this item, the last on the session's agenda, was restricted to two minutes.

Some deputies complained that the time allocated for them to speak was too short and asked to raise the time to three or five minutes.

"Two minutes is not enough, and I therefore ask for five minutes, as long as deputies commit to discussing important matters that are of concern to the country as a whole

and not to one's electoral district," Deputy Mansour Murad said.

Other deputies argued over whether this item should fall first or last on the agenda.

"I ask the House to leave the item as the last one on the agenda so that those who wish to speak will not leave at the beginning of the session," Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said.

The House, meanwhile, resumed its discussion of a draft customs law, which was carried over from the 12th Parliament. A total of 185 articles out of the law's 256 have now been endorsed.

Early tax filers can benefit from discount — department

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department (ITD) Sunday announced that taxpayers can benefit from a six per cent discount on their income tax for 1997 if they submit statements before the end of January.

ITD Director Mansour Haddadin said his department has mailed income tax forms, which should be filled out and returned. Taxpayers who have no post office boxes will receive their forms through the local authorities in the various governorates, he added.

Taxpayers who fail to receive forms should enquire in person at the department or at its branches around the Kingdom for a settlement as soon as possible, he said.

Persons with complaints, enquiries, or suggestions pertaining to filing income tax forms can contact the ITD by telephone at 5535613.

Citizens whose monthly income is JD500 or above are required by law to fill out ITD forms and provide particulars about their income during the past year.

Higher Court postpones final ruling on weeklies

By Alfa Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Higher Court of Justice has for the fourth time in three months postponed a final ruling in the case presented by eight weekly newspapers contesting the government's interpretation of Article 24 of the temporary Press and Publications Law.

According to officials, the Higher Court's final ruling on the case is expected to be handed down on Jan. 26.

The eight weeklies accuse the government of violating the new press law imposed by the Cabinet on May 17.

Article 24 of the law states that weekly papers should increase their "registered" capital to JD300,000. The weeklies insist that the point does not mean, actually, paying the amount, while the government insists it does.

According to their interpretation of the law, most of the weeklies have adjusted their situation by "registering" the total amount requested and depositing only half in the bank. This did not satisfy the government, which insisted that the capital must be fully deposited in cash in the bank.

The government, therefore, suspended 13 weeklies in September, and revoked their licences in November. Eight of the weeklies went to the Higher Court contesting the government's decision, claiming that the law was "unconstitutional" and violated their acquired rights.

Nidal Mansour, editor of Al Hadath weekly, expressed disappointment with the postponement, saying that "we had hoped that the Higher Court would have come up with a decision by now, but unfortunately it hasn't."

The issue is no longer confined only to restrictions on freedom of the press, but has gone beyond that to affecting people's financial interests and jobs, he said.

"About 300 people have lost their jobs since the weeklies closed down... it's been four months now, press institutions have been severely damaged and Jordan's image abroad has been distorted by this law," he said.

Hani Dahleh, one of the lawyers who filed the lawsuit against the government, said the Higher Court postponed its verdict because there were new

judges in the 10-member tribunal who needed to study the case.

Hussein Mjallit, president of the lawyer's association and another lawyer representing the weeklies, said he was not surprised with the court's decision.

"The case has certain peculiarities and it would not be strange if they consider it further," he said. Analysts have stated that the Higher Court is delaying its verdict pending a decision by the Lower House of Parliament, which is currently studying the law.

Many deputies had expressed their opposition to the new law, aimed at restricting and clamping down on what officials in the government described as an unruly tabloid press often accused of sensational writing and lack of credibility.

During the House's first reading of the law, 30 out of the 73 deputies present voted in favour of sending it back to the government.

"According to what we have seen so far from the new Parliament, we expect a positive attitude that will help in expanding the ceiling of freedom of expression," Mr. Mansour said.

Ministry intensifies programmes during Ramadan to deal with homelessness

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Social Development announced that it has launched a social security programme designed to protect street children and combat begging and homelessness in Jordan.

Farouq Naghawi, the ministry's secretary general, said the ministry has intensified campaigns during the month of Ramadan to deal with homelessness. Special committees have been created to patrol the streets of Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa, working from seven in the morning until midnight to pick up young beggars and street children, he explained.

The campaign, which is being carried out in association with the Public Security Department, aims at temporarily entrusting the collected children with charitable

and voluntary societies pending studies into their background and a final decision on their case.

Homeless children will be taken care of by organisations working jointly with the ministry or by non-governmental organisations, according to Mr. Naghawi. The ministry will offer financial aid or rehabilitation programmes to the homeless and beggars on a case by case basis after each has been examined, he added.

In a recent interview, Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser said the authorities last year picked up 800 children and adult vagrants and beggars from the streets. The majority of those rounded up in June and July in Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid were boys aged between seven and 11 years, he noted.

Dr. Mamser said the

ministry was working on amending regulations to hold parents responsible for abusing their children and forcing them to the streets.

The ministry, he added, wants to work out a programme to ensure that beggars and street children are successfully integrated into society.

Mr. Naghawi said the ministry intends to open special centres for women beggars at Um Al Asaker town, to which the women can bring along their infants to stay with them pending a final decision on their cases.

According to the Ministry of Social Development, plans are under way to set up two rehabilitation centres to offer street children two to three-year vocational training programmes to prepare them as useful citizens in society.

News in brief

Rifai meets with ambassadors

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Zeid Rifai Sunday met with Iranian Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ali Subhani and discussed bilateral relations. Mr. Subhani commended Jordan's participation in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting held in Tehran last month and

praised HRH Crown Prince Hassan's efforts, which he said contributed to the success of the conference. Also Sunday, Mr. Rifai received in two separate meetings Chinese Ambassador to Jordan Liu Baolai and Lord Waverly of Britain, member of the British House of Lords. Lord Waverly was accompanied by British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe, with whom he reviewed the Middle East peace process and the obstacles facing it.

Company announces 6-month export totals

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Indian Chemicals Company exported 130,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid worth \$23.6 million to the Indian market during the last 6 months of 1997, company sources said Sunday. The company, which became operational in July 1997, aims to produce 220,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid, to be entirely exported to Indian markets.

Point system for traffic violations scheduled to be enacted in April

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In a bid to improve road safety and reduce the soaring number of car accidents, Jordan will launch new regulations on April 1 under which points will be collected to help authorities take action against repeat traffic offenders, officials said Sunday.

Under rules designed by the Ministry of Interior, points will be recorded for every major offence, such as failing to stop at red lights or driving a car without a proper licence.

These points will be kept in the file of each Jordanian and foreigner holding a valid Jordanian driving licence. When drivers accumulate 11 points, they have to attend a rehabilitation course at the state-sponsored driving school and when they reach 12 points, their licences will be revoked for two months.

"This modern method is designed to reduce the number of traffic accidents in the Kingdom," an official source told the Jordan Times Sunday.

The number of traffic accidents in the Kingdom, among the highest in the world, have increased by around 10 per cent each year. In 1996, 552 people were killed and 15,375 injured in over 33,000 reported road accidents.

Points by violators will be registered after they pay any required fines or after the court issues a final ruling on settled fines.

Violations that are worth four points include driving without a licence, or under the influence of

alcohol or drugs, failure to report to the nearest police station in the event of an accident leading to injury, using forged licence plates, and violating one-way street rules.

Other offences bearing similar penalties include transporting toxic or explosive substances in residential areas without obtaining the proper permit and failure to stop at red lights or use head and tail lights at night if streets are not lit.

All traffic tickets issued by the police will be added to each driver's file as of April 1 via a computerised system, the official source said.

Upon accumulating 11 points, motorists will be forced to take a two-day course at the Jordan Traffic Institute, supervised by the Public Security Department.

After they conclude the course, four points will be deducted from their file. They will be allowed to repeat the same procedure once every two years.

If motorists exceed 12 points, their licences will be revoked for two months. After that, every four points they collect will result in the revocation of the licence for two more months.

According to the new regulations, motorists can obtain information on the number of points they have collected.

Insurance companies can also get information about a driver's record, including the number of times his/her licence was revoked but not the number of points he/she scored.

Opposition groups denounce Jordanian participation in joint military manoeuvres

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian opposition groups and deputies Sunday lashed out at the government's decision to attend joint American-Israeli-Turkish military manoeuvres scheduled for today, describing the decision as a "violation" of Arab security.

"The decision is a dangerous setback to Jordan's policy because it is a clear declaration of the Kingdom's dissociation from Arab and Muslim ranks," said Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi in a statement that was made available to the Jordan Times.

"This does not match with government promises that it will enhance its relationship with Arab states... It is a clear threat to Arab and Muslim security," said Dr. Abbadi, an independent centrist politician.

Acting Minister of State for Information Affairs Nasser Lawzi told reporters Saturday that the Kingdom accepted an invitation to attend the exercises and said the members of the team would be announced later.

Informed sources said Brigadier General Hussein Khasawneh, commander of the Kingdom's naval forces, is expected to represent Jordan in the manoeuvres.

The five-day exercise in the eastern Mediterranean, codenamed Reliant Mermaid, has drawn a wide range of criticism from several Arab and Muslim states, especially Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Iran.

Egypt and Syria, which spearheaded a campaign against the exercises, asked Ankara to halt all military cooperation with the Jewish state.

Israeli and Turkish military officials said the games, which were scheduled to take place in November 1996 but were postponed several times,

will focus on search and rescue operations in territorial waters and international airspace, in line with a military accord signed between Israel and Turkey in February 1996.

A spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood movement denounced the government's decision to participate, saying that it would be harmful to the Kingdom.

"Joining military pacts with Turkey and Israel will not serve the interests of the country," said Brotherhood member Jamil Abu Bakr.

"The Turkish-Israeli alliance is a threat to the Arab Nation," Mr. Abu Bakr told the Jordan Times.

"This alliance reminds us of the infamous pact in the fifties between Turkey and some Arab countries that was rejected then by the majority of Arabs," said Mr. Abu Bakr. He was referring to the short-lived Baghdad Pact, which

included Turkey and Iraq, then ruled by late King Faisal.

A meeting grouping Islamist, leftist, and pan-Arab opposition parties is expected to be held today to discuss the issue.

Secretary General of the Jordan Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party Tayseer Humis said the exercise is a threat to the "national sovereignty" of some Arab states and would pave the way for more military cooperation between Turkey and Israel.

"Our party rejects any Jordanian or Arab participation in the manoeuvres... and considers the decision a deviation from the principles of the Arab League and the joint Arab Defence Pact," Mr. Humis told the Jordan Times.

The decision to take part in the manoeuvres is an "attempt to enhance the Zionist entity and its aggressive, imperialistic policies against the Arab Nation," added Mr. Humis.

Levy resigns, sparking crisis for Netanyahu

(Continued from page 1)

Israel's promise of a troop pullback in the West Bank.

President Clinton's special Mideast envoy Dennis Ross is due to visit the region this week. On Jan. 20 Mr. Netanyahu is expected to present a concrete pullback plan at the White House, and Mr. Clinton is to meet with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat two days later, Israel and Palestinian officials confirmed Sunday.

Mr. Levy's strong condemnation of the government's half-hearted peace moves appeared to make it difficult for him to go back this time.

The government, he said, should seek to "further the peace process, which is good for Israel," Mr. Levy said. "We could have derived advantages if we had led the process."

Instead, "there are those who think they can gain another week, another month, another two weeks," foresaking the initiative and meaning that "we will have to give in later, under more difficult conditions."

Mr. Levy, 60, has been the weakest link in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition since their uneasy alliance began.

First, Mr. Netanyahu once opposed the peace

process and remains lukewarm about it, while Mr. Levy has emerged as an unequivocal supporter. Second, Mr. Netanyahu is committed to free markets while Mr. Levy leans toward active social policy.

And some say the real problem is ego: the thin-skinned, Moroccan-born Mr. Levy, a former bricklayer who rose through trade-union politics, has never abandoned his dream to be prime minister and cannot stand playing second fiddle to the younger, slicker Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Levy, who immigrated to Israel in 1957 when he was 20 and settled in Beit Shean, near the Jordan

River, is a hero to many of his fellow Sephardim, or Jews of Middle Eastern descent.

Mr. Levy said that if elections are brought forward, Geshet would run independently — finally testing his real political strength in this constituency.

In 1992, Mr. Levy helped bring down Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir by suggesting just before elections that the Likud Party was racist toward Sephardim. When he lost Likud's leadership race to Mr. Netanyahu a year later, he bolted the party and formed Geshet, only to link with Mr. Netanyahu just before the 1996 election.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

"Jour de Fête" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of writing arabesque, miniature on silk by Hatouf Hijazi Tabba'a, at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre, Jabal Amman, 2nd Circle (Tel. 647858) until Jan. 15.

* Display of Bani Hamida handicrafts (rugs, cushions, and wall hangings) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696/7), until Jan. 5.

* "Modern Bulgarian Art" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Jan. 5.

* Works by a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).

* Works by contemporary Arab artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh.

High winds, rough seas claim victims in stormy Europe

MADRID (AFP) — Fierce winds and rough seas along Europe's western and southern rims have claimed at least three new victims, and more bad weather was on the way, authorities said Saturday.

Police in Spain said divers had found the body of a 22-year-old German tourist who was swept away while swimming on Gran Canaria, in the Canary Islands Friday.

Searches were ongoing in the islands for 16 people who were aboard a Moroccan fishing boat which sank Thursday during a storm.

But rescue efforts had been called off for a French sailor presumed dead after he went missing off the Spanish island of Majorca in the Mediterranean, they said.

The sailor, who was not wearing a life-vest, had fallen into the storm-swept sea Friday from a boat heading to Algeria.

Tempestuous weather across the British Isles and Ireland also led to a similar

accident Saturday when Irish coastguards abandoned a search for a Spanish sailor who fell overboard from a storm-lashed trawler at around 09H40 GMT.

A search involving a helicopter and two other Spanish boats in the area, 190 kilometres off Ireland's west coast, took place in "appalling conditions," emergency services there said.

British and Irish roads have been closed out of fear that wind gusts of up to 145 kilometres per hour and intense rain could bring down trees.

Several thousand people in the British Isles are without electricity, a number of properties has been damaged, and police have advised motorists not to make trips unless they were unavoidable.

Ferries have stopped operating on the west coast of Scotland, and a high number of roads and bridges were closed by high winds.

Channel car ferries

between France and England were delayed because of winds of up to 100 kilometres an hour, authorities said.

Thursday, two elderly people and a baby were killed in a road accident in Gloucester, England, blamed on the storms, which are associated with a cold front from the North Atlantic moving across France and southern England.

In Belgium, strong winds uprooted trees and traffic signs, cluttering roads and causing traffic accidents, firefighters said. But there were no reports of injuries.

French meteorologists said even stronger storms were expected with a powerful depression developing Sunday morning off the coast of Cornwall, south-west England, and progressing towards the North Sea.

The latest low pressure front would lead to strong winds in the English Channel and along the Brittany coast, early Sunday. They predicted gusts of up to 180 kilometres per hour for Brittany.

Meteorologist Yves Paugam said: "The gusts will be in the tornado category, accompanied by very violent squalls."

Waves were expected to reach heights of 10 metres in the open sea. Inland regions of northern France were also expected to experience strong gusts Sunday afternoon.

Regional authorities have urged the public to tie down loose objects and to stay at home if possible. Friday, powerful winds uprooted a tree which smashed into a truck, killing the driver.

Rooftops, chimneys and belltowers were also sent flying in areas across western Brittany, where emergency services reported power cuts, traffic chaos and delays in rail services.

For the third consecutive day some 600 tourists remained stranded on the islands of Molene and Ouessant off the Brittany port of Brest. They cannot return to the mainland until seas calm.



A man holds the fence of Kerity harbour as strong winds and huge waves break on the French Atlantic coast on Jan. 4 (AFP photo)

India's Hindu nationalists predict election sweep after positive poll

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's powerful Hindu nationalists Sunday said they would sweep the February-March general elections as a poll survey revealed they were proceeding towards a clear majority.

Lal Krishna Advani, president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), said he was "optimistic" the party would vastly improve its last election performance in 1996 when it was shy of absolute majority.

"Mr. Advani said the BJP was the only national party to have 'enlarged its base in the last one-and-a-half years' and the only bloc offering a prime ministerial candidate to voters."

"Our increased support base is going to be with us. Even those who are not in our support base, those who disagree with us ... feel that BJP deserves one more chance," he said in an interview with the Asian Age daily.

Meanwhile, a survey for the Pioneer newspaper said the BJP and its six allies would win between 260 and 270 seats in the 545-member lower house of parliament.

The survey, covering voters across 17 of India's 25 states, suggested that BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee was the most favoured candidate for prime minister. Forty-eight per cent of the 4,120 respondents in the January 2-3 survey thought he was the best person for the job.

"The BJP won 162 parliamentary seats in the 1996 elections. Mr. Vajpayee took office as prime minister but had to quit after failing to prove parliamentary majority."

"Our adversaries have no prime ministerial candidate. That advantage the BJP has today. No other party has

it," Mr. Advani said.

The Pioneer survey said the Congress I party, which sparked fresh elections when it abruptly withdrew its backing from a minority coalition government in November, would get between 130 and 150 seats.

The 112-year-old Congress got 140 seats in the 1996 elections.

The survey said 24 per cent of those interviewed felt that Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of Congress former premier Rajiv Gandhi, was the best choice for prime minister.

But most voters also said Gandhi, a powerful force in the party since her husband's 1991 assassination, could not spur the Congress on to victory despite her decision to campaign for the party.

Sixty per cent thought her role would not make a great difference.

"Mr. Advani echoed the sentiment ... 'Maybe it will provide some little pep-giving injection. It won't affect the overall political scene,' he said."

Sonia Gandhi has steadfastly refused offers to lead the ailing Congress, headed by Sitaram Kesri, an

octogenarian.

Mr. Advani said Mr. Kesri, whose leadership has witnessed high-profile defections from the Congress and increasing in-fighting, had helped the BJP become India's dominant party.

"I would not have reached the present point had it not been for friends like Sitaram Kesri. I am deeply grateful, deeply indebted to him ... He talks of the party being a railway platform."

Referring to Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi's statement that the Congress should be disbanded after Indian independence from British rule, Mr. Advani said: "When the history of the Congress is written, it would be said that Mr. Kesri was the true Gandhian."

The Congress, blamed for fuelling the political crisis by withdrawing support to the United Front minority coalition over Rajiv Gandhi's murder, has no obvious prime ministerial candidate. The Front is yet to formally choose a leader.

Caretaker Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral has already said he would "think twice" before taking on the top job again.

The survey said the United Front, which got 179 seats in the last elections, was likely to be relegated to third place with between 115 and 125 seats.

Indian analysts have, however, predicted that the elections will again lead to a hung parliament.

Sonia Gandhi to launch all-out campaign for India's Congress party

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Sonia Gandhi, the powerful widow of slain Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi, will launch an all-out electoral campaign for her husband's embattled Congress party, news reports said Sunday.

Sources in the Congress said the enigmatic Italian-born widow wanted to undertake gruelling tours across remote villages and tribal areas to boost the party's waning image before the February-March general elections.

"She has said she will campaign for the entire period," a Congress leader was quoted by the Asian Age daily Sunday. "After all, she is a Gandhiji."

The 51-year-old Sonia, or "Madam," has been a powerful behind-the-scenes force in the Congress since her husband's 1991 assassination but has declined top party posts or a high-profile role.

However, late last month she announced her decision to campaign for the party, dominated by her husband's family during much of this century. Sonia Gandhi has not said if she would lead the party or contest elections, but she and her equally politically-naïve daughter Priyanka, 25, have been requested by the party to stand as candidates.

Analysts, however, say the 112-year-old party would not win the elections despite Sonia Gandhi's intervention. The Congress, which was led by Sonia Gandhi's husband Rajiv, his mother Indira Gandhi and her father Jawaharlal Nehru, has been wracked by corruption scandals, defections and splits and a waning electoral appeal.

The party suffered its worst electoral defeat in general elections two years ago.

Congress sources said they wanted Sonia Gandhi to launch her campaign from her husband's constituency in northern India or a small southern town where Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a suicide bomber.

E. Timorese Nobel laureate wants safe haven for guerrillas as precursor to truce

SYDNEY (AFP) — Nobel laureate Jose Ramos Horta said Sunday that his weekend appeal for an end to armed struggle by his comrades in the East Timorese resistance was conditional on a gesture of goodwill by Indonesia.

The exiled diplomat Saturday urged the resistance movement to cease fighting and pursue a non-violent strategy of the sort "inspired by the great men of this century," in an essay in the International Herald Tribune.

But he told AFP a unilateral ceasefire by resistance fighters could result in their capture or slaughter by Indonesian troops unless there was also an internationally protected safe haven for the 1,000 guerrillas now active and their families.

Mr. Horta, who has represented East Timor's Fretilin movement at the U.N. since the former Portuguese colony was invaded by Indonesia in 1975, said he had been appealing for months for both sides to end armed conflict and seek a peaceful resolution.

"But for the resistance to do that there also has to be a goodwill gesture by Indonesia, such as to release their East Timorese prisoners and reduce the heavy presence of troops in the country."

In the article, Mr. Horta also acknowledged errors

by his side, saying that while Indonesia could not escape blame, East Timorese leaders had sometimes acted with immaturity and "at other times with reckless irresponsibility."

"We were the ones who unleashed a civil war that caused the deaths of hundreds of our own people. Some in Fretilin were particularly violent during that period, creating deep divisions and resentment in East Timor."

"Indonesia must improve the situation in East Timor. Political prisoners should be released; the widespread human rights violations must stop and Indonesian troop reductions should be carried out."

Such steps, he argued, could lead to local autonomy and eventually a referendum on self-determination for East Timor under U.N. auspices to work out the final status of the territory.

"The East Timorese resistance must cease their activities and pursue a non-violent strategy inspired by the great men of this century, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama."

"As Indonesia faces an increasingly difficult future, it cannot afford the economic and diplomatic costs of a continuing occupation of East Timor."

More effort was required by the international com-

munity to push Indonesia to "cut its losses in East Timor."

Mr. Horta, who shared the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize with East Timor's Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo, called on the international community to press harder for a peaceful solution to the conflict, in which independent sources say tens of thousands of lives have been lost.

Mr. Horta, who met South African President Nelson Mandela for talks in South Africa last year, said his people had experienced brutality of genocidal proportions, with the loss of around one third of its population.

"Our culture has been severely damaged, our people marginalised by the Indonesian immigrants, their land taken and the environment destroyed."

President Suharto's Indonesian government suffered increasing international opprobrium and faced a looming recession following the collapse of its currency. "It is now clear that the end of his regime is near and East Timor's freedom is in sight."

Both sides, he said, should "reflect on the East Timor tragedy and seek a negotiated settlement."

"We East Timorese leaders must have the courage and humility to acknowledge our share of the tragedy."

Australian bushfire threat eases

SYDNEY (AFP) — Bushfires forced the closure of two national parks Sunday but rain and cooler weather eased the threat from the dozens of bushfires still blazing in two eastern Australian states.

Victoria's biggest fire since 1985 had destroyed more than 32,000 hectares of Alpine National Park by Sunday morning as fire crews took advantage of a cold front to establish control lines on the perimeter.

But authorities, which had deployed nearly 500 firefighters, two fixed wing water bombers and four helicopters to fight the blaze, closed the main access road and asked visitors to avoid the area.

Heavy cloud cover Saturday prevented the use of fire bombing aircraft after the blaze escalated Friday ripping through 20,000 hectares of the park.

Visitors were also asked to avoid the Croajingolong National Park of eastern Victoria because of a second major fire which had covered 3,700 hectares.

In Sydney, Rural Fire Service spokeswoman Gilly Paxton said all the New South Wales fires were either held within containment lines or burning in areas where they posed little threat.

"Things are improving and look set to keep improving today," she said.

"Obviously we're still working on a number of fires and there's still a lot of work to do but in general there's no great problem," she said.

We are not uncouth, lazy and ugly Aussies, says Australian government

SYDNEY (AFP) — Reports here Sunday portraying Australians through Asian eyes as being rude, uncouth, lazy and hypocritical were slammed by the author of the study on which they were based and by the Australian government.

Reports published by Brisbane's Sunday Mail and by Sydney's Sunday Telegraph under the banner headline "Ugly Aussies," claimed Asians saw Australians as ungovernable and as "congenital criminals" because of their convict heritage.

It also quoted the Centre for the Study of Australia-Asian Relations at Brisbane's Griffith University as saying that many Japanese and Koreans regarded Australia as "a semi-developed country" while Japanese tourists found it "dirty" and "boring."

But Australian National

University (ANU) lecturer Alison Broinowski, who wrote the section on which the reports were based, said it had been taken out of context, adding: "This is tabloid journalism at its most simplistic."

Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock, whose department is responsible for vetting the thousands of applications from Asians who want to emigrate to Australia, said the newspaper reports were not backed up by facts.

It was clear from the migration programme, student visa enrolments and Asian visitor numbers, that the survey did not reflect reality, he added.

But he said his greatest concern was that the study would be picked up by Australian correspondents for Asian media, and used to further damage Australia in the region.

The newspaper reports said Australians thought of them-

selves as technologically advanced, well-liked, trusted, egalitarian, friendly and a people seen as "honest brokers" through Asian eyes.

But the reality, they said, was that South East Asian students found the standard of education in Australia low and Chinese and Vietnamese people considered Australia an inferior country to migrate to.

Hong Kong citizens found Australians to be dishonest and Thai believed they were not safe to walk the streets in Australia.

Ms. Broinowski said the chapter she had written was not a comprehensive survey of statistics and trends and relied on sources such as reported statements from Asian business people, students and newspaper reports from the region.

She had examined a series of interviews in Chinese of

Chinese people in Australia, who were more frank because they were speaking their native language.

Some of their comments were "highly positive" and some were not, but they revealed the widespread Chinese perception of themselves as coming from "a sophisticated society" with a long history, in contrast to Australia's short history of European settlement.

Tourist exit surveys had shown that the vast majority had a good time in Australia and that only one person had made the comment that it was dirty and that he would not come again.

The comment about dishonesty in Australians by a Hong Kong resident was a generalisation drawn from the behaviour of now disgraced former entrepreneur Alan Bond, who was jailed for fraud.

South Korea to withdraw military attaches as cost cutting measure

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea will withdraw its military attaches from five countries and delay plans to set up office in two other places in a cost cutting move, the defence ministry said Sunday.

A ministry spokesman said the existing offices in Venezuela, Burma, Greece, Austria and Morocco would be closed. Plans to open offices in

South Africa and the Ukraine would also be postponed.

The move was the second foreign exchange cost cutting action announced by the South Korean military since South Korea was engulfed by Asia's economic crisis late last year.

In December the ministry, one of the government's biggest dollar

spenders, said it was suspending a number of foreign equipment purchases, and expected to cut overseas spending more drastically this year.

The ministry declined to give details of the deferred orders for security reasons but newspapers said an order for C-130 transport planes had been affected as was a project to beef up coastal radar surveillance.

Arap Moi confirmed for 5th term

NAIROBI (AP) — Kenya's election chief has confirmed President Daniel Arap Moi as the winner of the nation's chaotic elections. Independent monitors upheld the vote, calling it disorganised but an accurate reflection of the will of Kenya's people.

Although still unable to provide complete, official results, the head of the electoral commission said Saturday that Mr. Moi had secured the requisite 25 per cent of the vote in five out of eight provinces, a plurality of the total vote and a parliamentary seat, giving Mr. Moi his fifth straight term.

It wasn't clear whether Mr. Moi could be declared the winner outright before all the votes had been counted in Kenya's third multiparty elections since independence. Some reports said the formal swearing-in would take place as early as Monday.

According to partial, official results, Mr. Moi had a lead of more than 400,000 votes over his main challenger, Mwai Kibaki. The next set of official results were expected Sunday.

Electoral Chairman Samuel Kivuitu said he didn't expect results from the sparsely populated north and two Nairobi constituencies to affect the outcome of the race.

Friday, Mr. Kibaki and third-place Raila Odinga protested the vote, saying it was rigged and calling for a rerun within 21 days.

While individual presidential candidates can file suit to contest results, Mr. Kivuitu said the commission had no power to void elections and call for a new vote.

Opposition leaders complaining of widespread serious irregularities suffered another setback Saturday when a federation of independent Kenyan observers called the electoral process satisfactory.

The observers urged Kenyans to respect the results, despite reports of scattered vote-buying and assorted organisational problems that created confusion and delays in voting.

"It is clear that the logistical and administrative organisation of the elections was characterised by chaos and inefficiency," Mutawa Musyimi, secretary general of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, said.

"Notwithstanding, the voting process was generally handled well by polling station officials and closely scrutinised by party agents and poll watchers."

"As a result, the organisations conducting the observation of the elections have to conclude that the results do, on the whole, reflect the wishes of the Kenyan voters," he said.

Slightly more than 9 million of Kenya's 29 million people were registered to vote.

He said the ruling party's influence over state-run radio and television, gerrymandering of electoral constituencies in favour of Kanu and bribery and vote-buying — again blamed on Kanu — had increased tensions, lowered confidence in the electoral process and failed to create a level playing field.

But overall — and compared to 1992 elections — he said, in the vast majority of cases, Kenyans were able to cast their vote without interference.

Before and after the 1992 vote, the first under a multiparty system for 23 years, at least 1,500 people were killed and 300,000 displaced in politically motivated violence.

This time around, eight people were killed in campaign-related clashes.

Feud over custody of girl haunts Pakistan's Bhutto family

KARACHI (AFP) — Pakistan's troubled Bhutto family is caught in a bitter custody battle for the daughter of the slain premier Benazir Bhutto.

Centre stage are Mur-taza's first wife Fauzia, the mother of 15-year-old Fatima, and Mur-taza's widow Ghinwa, the girl's guardian.

"She is my blood. She is my flesh," said Fauzia, who has returned home from her United States home to file a custody suit in court. Ms Fauzia, who has accused Ghinwa of kidnapping Fatima when she was three years old and "brainwashing" her, has vowed to win back her daughter "at any cost."

The first hearing of the custody case is expected this month.

Mur-taza divorced Fauzia in 1985 after four years of marriage and married Ghinwa in 1988 while in exile in Syria. The couple lived there with Fatima until 1993 when Mur-taza ended 16 years of exile and returned to Pakistan.

The estranged brother of Benazir Bhutto was killed in a police shootout here in September 1996. Ms. Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, has been charged with complicity in the killing.

Fauzia, claiming Lebanese-born Ghinwa had prevented her reunion with Fatima, told reporters here she would not give up her struggle to secure her daughter.

"She was taken away from me for no fault of mine. I am her real mother and I want her at any cost," said Fauzia, 37, who works as a teacher in Los Angeles.

"Obviously a real mother can give more love and a better future. It is up to Fatima whether she wants to stay with me in Pakistan or in America where I have very good family environment."

Ghinwa, the natural mother of Mur-taza's seven-year-old son Zulfikar Ali Junior, claims Fatima wants to remain with her.

"Nobody can brainwash (her) as she is a very intelligent girl and she is free to do her own will."

Fatima has made no secret of the fact she adores Ghinwa, saying: "She has given me all the love."

In a letter to Fauzia released to the press Friday, Ghinwa urged her not to wage a public battle for the teenager.

"Please spare Mir Mur-taza's children the humiliation of having their parents discussed in this frivolous and scandalous way in the columns of the press," Ghinwa wrote.

A spokesman for Ghinwa said Fatima "is mature enough to decide whether she wants to live with Fauzia or with Ghinwa."

Fauzia married Mur-taza during his exile in 1981. Her sister Rehana married Mur-taza's younger brother Shah Nawaz around the same time.

The Bhutto brothers had gone into exile after their father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was toppled as prime minister in a military coup in 1977. He was hanged two years later.

In 1985, Shah Nawaz was found dead under mysterious circumstances in his apartment in France. The Bhutto family suspected Rehana was involved leading to a rift between Mur-taza and Fauzia. They divorced soon after.

After Mur-taza's death, Ghinwa took over leadership of his PPP-SB (Shah Nawaz Bhutto group) political party formed amid a feud with Benazir over who was the rightful heir to the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) founded by their father.

Benazir Bhutto's government was sacked around two months after the killing of Mur-taza and in the build up to the new election last February Fatima assisted Ghinwa with her campaigning. Fatima also said she intended to enter politics in the future.

Supporter of deposed Cambodian prince arrested while under U.N. protection

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian police have arrested a supporter of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh who was attempting to leave the country under U.N. protection, diplomats and other officials said Sunday.

Chau Sakhon, a military police commander and member of the prince's royalist FUNCINPEC party, was plucked from a United Nations vehicle at Phnom Penh's airport Saturday as he waited to board a flight to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, they said.

"We were accompanying him," said David Hawk, the acting director of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia, who was present at the scene.

"There were no guns drawn, but obviously the police had serious orders to arrest him," he said. "He was in the car."

Mr. Hawk and diplomats familiar with the incident cautioned that Chau Sakhon's case was an unusual one and might mean that the Cambodian government had changed its policy regarding U.N. protection for the deposed prince's supporters.

The government has allowed U.N. monitors into the country to observe the situation here following the prince's violent ouster in July after which more than 40 of his supporters were executed.

Chau Sakhon had been convicted of drug smuggling and imprisoned on

smuggling charges in late June after a seven-tonne shipment of marijuana was seized in the southern port of Sihanoukville.

The case had wide-ranging political implications as members of FUNCINPEC claimed the guilty party was in fact a prominent supporter of powerful Second Prime Minister

Hun Sen who effectively deposed the prince.

The main proponent of that view, Interior Ministry Secretary of State Ho Sok, was the first of the prince's supporters to be killed following his ouster, executed while in police custody.

Despite government assurances that an investigation into the execution

would be forthcoming, no one has yet been arrested and FUNCINPEC officials claim he was killed in part because of his accusations in the Chau Sakhon case.

Meanwhile Chau Sakhon remained in prison until Dec. 26, when a Phnom Penh appeals court overturned his conviction and freed him.

Local reports said the judges found there was not enough evidence to link him with the drug shipment and one court official was cited as saying the conviction had been politically motivated.

Three days later, the ministry of justice effectively suspended the three appeals court judges who made the decision, transferring them from the court to the ministry, claiming that the ruling had been "abnormal."

Human rights workers and legal experts condemned the ministry's decision as a violation of the judiciary's independence, but the ministry defended it and said it would not revoke the appeals court's decision.

Officials instead said they would appeal the decision to the Supreme Court but it was not clear if the appeal had been filed before Chau Sakhon was arrested at the airport.

If it had, Chau Sakhon may have been legally barred from leaving Cambodia, Mr. Hawk said, adding that the U.N. had not yet decided what action it would take in the case.

"The issue is whether there was an appeal filed," he said. "We checked with the court and as of Friday we were under the impression from the court that it had not been."

Government and court officials were not immediately available to comment on the matter.

Pol Pot not in Cambodia — Thai FM

BANGKOK (AFP) — Pol Pot is no longer in Cambodia, Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan said Sunday, though he did not know where the former Khmer Rouge leader had gone.

"What I can say is that he is not in Cambodia now, but I don't know his current whereabouts," Mr. Surin told AFP, following reports that the Khmer Rouge leader had fled to China.

Mr. Surin said the information came from a source who did not know where Pol Pot left Cambodia. He also said, however, there was no "independent confirmation" of the story.

In an earlier interview, Mr. Surin told the Nation daily: "Definitely, he is not in Thailand."

Mr. Surin was referring to reports that the Khmer Rouge leader had fled to escape a possible war crimes tribunal linked to the Khmer Rouge's 1970s rule when up to two million Cambodians died.

Pol Pot was sentenced to house arrest for life at a show trial led by former comrades in August.

The head of Cambodia's resistance army General Nhiek Bun Chhay was Thursday quoted by two Cambodia newspapers as saying Pol Pot fled to China last month.

The reports were denied by the Cambodian and Chinese governments. The Thai military, which keeps a close watch on Cambodian affairs has so far made no comment.

But Nhiek Bun Chhay told AFP Friday he

could not confirm reports of Pol Pot's flight.

"It is not confirmed," he said. "I am checking this information to find out whether it is true or not but I do not know if it is true yet."

The reports followed rumours in December in Bangkok and Phnom Penh that Pol Pot had left his jungle home in northern Cambodia for medical treatment in China.

Pol Pot, architect of the killing fields, presided over a reign of terror between 1975 and 1979 when an estimated two million Cambodians, or a quarter of the population, died from torture, hunger and disease.

He said last year in an interview with the Far Eastern Economic Review that his "conscience was clear." In television pictures taken at the time, the 72-year-old looked frail and sick.

Diplomats and analysts in Phnom Penh have said it is unlikely Pol Pot would find refuge in China — his former ally between 1975-78 — given Beijing's support for strongman Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, the sworn enemy of the Khmer Rouge.

Khmer Rouge leaders turned on Pol Pot in August after his power struggle with the guerrilla group's feared Chief of Staff Ta Mok.

Remnants of the Khmer Rouge are currently fighting government forces in north-western Cambodia alongside troops loyal to Cambodia's ousted first premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Unabomber trial set to focus on Kaczynski's mental health

SACRAMENTO, California (AFP) — The trial of suspected Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski is set to open here Monday when a 12-member jury will hear prosecution arguments that the Montana hermit sent mail bombs killing two people in California.

The 55-year-old Harvard-educated former math professor is accused of mailing bombs that killed two California men and faces separate murder charges in New Jersey for the murder of an advertising executive there.

In all, the Unabomber is blamed for 16 attacks that also injured 23 people between 1979 and 1995.

The star witness for the defence is Mr. Kaczynski's own brother, David Kaczynski, who tipped off investigators that the Unabomber was in all probability his reclusive, older brother.

David Kaczynski is expected to testify that prosecution lawyers misled him into believing they would not seek the death penalty for Theodore, which he will face if convicted of the last bombing, a 1995 attack that killed California Forestry Association lobbyist Gilbert Murray.

David Kaczynski is expected to play a pivotal

role in another central issue of the trial — his brother's sanity — by testifying that his brother is deeply emotionally disturbed and hopelessly out of touch with reality.

Mr. Kaczynski himself, however, has been resisting a defence based on his mental state. During jury selection, he reacted angrily to a discussion of mental health experts, throwing his pen down on the table.

Mr. Kaczynski is also believed to have threatened to fire his lawyers over the use of his mental health as a defence.

He is represented by Quin Denvir, who unsuccessfully defended a suspect in the Billionaire Boys Club, and by Judy Clark, who got an acquittal for Susan Smith on charges that she drowned her two sons in a lake in South Carolina.

Last week, the two lawyers withdrew their intention to call expert witnesses to testify that the suspected bomber suffers from paranoid schizophrenia.

But they arranged to ship the Spartan Montana cabin where Mr. Kaczynski lived without power or running water so jurors can tour it and potentially gain insight into his psychological

makeup.

The prosecution, meanwhile, led by Robert Cleary, intends to portray Mr. Kaczynski as a cold-blooded, calculating killer who sought to spark a revolution that would overthrow Western technological society.

Prosecutors will show the jury voluminous writings and encoded diaries found in Mr. Kaczynski's cabin which they say contain details of the Unabomber's crimes.

The evidence against Mr. Kaczynski also includes the typewriter that produced the Unabomber's 35,000-word anti-technology manifesto and a carbon copy of the document — both items taken from the cabin.

"The prosecution has a very strong case," observed Don Heller, a former federal prosecutor now in private practice.

The identity of the nine women and three men on the jury will be protected until after the high-profile Unabomber trial is over. All said they could vote for capital punishment under the right set of circumstances.

Unabomber is an acronym used by federal investigators to identify their suspect, whose early targets were university professors and airline executives.

American scientists report new technique for rebuilding breasts

LONDON (AFP) — U.S. scientists have developed a new technique for rebuilding breast tissue using other cells from the woman's body, the Sunday Times reported.

The method could enable women who have had a mastectomy to avoid artificial breast implants and regrow new breasts naturally.

The project was launched by Reprogenesis, a firm based in Boston which works with university research teams in Anna Arbor in Michigan and in Charlotte in North Carolina.

Nipples have already been reconstituted using the new technique and the first experimental grafts will start in a few months, the paper said. Over the following 12 months, experiments to implant bigger samples of breast tissue would be carried out, the report said.

"Our initial intention is to provide an option for breast cancer patients, but the method could be used for cosmetic reconstructions and it has generated a lot of interest," said Shawn Stovall, a spokesman for Reprogenesis.

Scientists said it should be possible in five years time to implant a whole breast and hopefully reproduce lactation so recipients could breast-feed their babies.

The paper said breast tissue was grown from a small sample of fat and blood cells taken from the buttocks or the thighs. These cells were placed in a biodegradable mould and treated with growth stimulants. Within 24 hours, they began to multiply to form new tissue.

Ducks may be next for slaughter in Hong Kong bird flu scare

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hundreds of protesters marched through Hong Kong Sunday demanding better compensation for the slaughter of 1.5 million chickens, as health sources said ducks and geese may also have to be culled to stamp out the deadly bird flu.

Some 700 chicken breeders, farmers, vendors and drivers, all affected by the chicken cull, marched to the government offices here carrying banners, streamers and posters, calling for compensation for lost incomes.

More than 30,000 people, including drivers transporting the poultry, were temporarily out of work as a result of the government's move, the Chicken Industry's Labour Union said.

It estimated 10 million Hong Kong dollars (\$1.3 million) has been lost since the cull began last week.

Their protest came as sources warned that hundreds of thousands more

birds may meet the same fate as the slaughtered chickens. Test results due early next week will show if they have been infected with the H5N1 virus, the sources said.

Four people have now died from the virus and three others are in a critical condition, from a total of 16 now confirmed cases and six suspected sufferers.

There are about a million ducks, geese, quails and pigeons in Hong Kong. Those normally housed close to chickens in farms and markets have already been slaughtered as a precaution.

The government has also engaged experts to test rats, cats, and dogs to see whether they could also transmit the virus, after officials admitted scavenging animals had opened sacks of slaughtered chickens.

"We need to be absolutely sure that the virus will not spread to other animals and that no animals infected with the disease will be



Cooked chicken food workers join the protest march towards government headquarters in Hong Kong to protest the way the government handled the mass culling of chickens to ward off the deadly 'bird flu' virus, which has killed four people (Reuters photo)

at large because they could be another transmission source," a senior health official was quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying.

"If we don't take further steps to look into the potential natural reservoir of the disease, our efforts in killing all chickens will be in vain," he said.

Meanwhile the protesters handed a petition to Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa calling for immediate help.

"We hope the government will meet with representatives of various trade unions, representing the poultry industry, to listen to what they have to say... and their demands," said legislator Tsang Yok-Sing, whose political party, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong,

helped organised the rally. Mr. Tsang said he hoped the government would form a taskforce to tackle the crisis.

"With no chickens, we have no other livelihood," said one market stallholder. The government has also banned indefinitely the imports of chickens from China, widely believed to be source of the H5N1 virus.

"We're only asking the government to assist us in this difficult period," she told reporters.

The government has waived stallholder rents for the next three months, while chicken importers and farmers were to be paid 30 Hong Kong dollars (\$3.90) per chicken in compensation.

Friday the government began registering those in need of public help.

Steroids found in Cunanan gym bag

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A gym bag that Andrew Cunanan left behind at the outset of an alleged killing spree contained steroids which are known to cause violent behaviour when abused, a newspaper reported.

Five vials of injectable testosterone — often used illegally by athletes to build muscle — were found at the apartment where he died indicated an attack of explosive rage. Trail, an acquaintance of Cunanan's, was bludgeoned to death with a hammer.

The apartment was the home of David Madison, a former Cunanan lover and the second victim in the spree.

Testosterone is legally used as hormone therapy, but Cunanan had no medical need for it, the newspaper said. Studies show steroid use can lead to overaggressiveness and violent behaviour.

Miami Beach police recently released their investigative files showing they have no idea why Cunanan went on his alleged murderous rampage.

Minneapolis police said the condition of Trail's body and the amount of blood spattered at the apartment where he died indicated an attack of explosive rage. Trail, an acquaintance of Cunanan's, was bludgeoned to death with a hammer.

The apartment was the home of David Madison, a former Cunanan lover and the second victim in the spree.

Testosterone is legally used as hormone therapy, but Cunanan had no medical need for it, the newspaper said. Studies show steroid use can lead to overaggressiveness and violent behaviour.

Cunanan's close friends said he had long boasted of selling illegal drugs, primarily prescription drugs, including testosterone, the Star Tribune said. He also mentioned "smuggling" a product from Mexico, adding that almost all illegal testosterone is smuggled from Mexico.

The Star Tribune said its information came from more than 2,000 pages of documents and 2,300 crime-scene photos, as well as interviews with hundreds of people across the country, including investigators, criminologists, witnesses, friends and family members.

Officials did not test Cunanan's blood for increased levels of the hormone, and none of his friends saw him use steroids, nor did they remember him talking about using steroids.

Jordan Times

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Inexplicable silence

IF THE silence of the international community in the face of the growing carnage at the hands of savages in Algeria is shocking, the muted reaction of the Arab and Islamic countries is mind-boggling. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) states have recently convened a historic summit in Tehran but failed to give the situation in Algeria the due attention it deserves. On the other hand, the apparent lack of interest by the Arab World cannot be explained in any meaningful way. We simply cannot dismiss our inaction as an attempt to stay away from the internal affairs of the North African Arab country. When tens of thousands of innocent Algerians, including infants and children, are being butchered in the most inhuman way on almost daily basis we should not act as bystanders. How many more Algerians must have their throats slit before the Arab and Islamic states rise to shoulder their responsibility in working to halt the massacres. Our governments should be in the vanguard of those who have to move in a bid to stop the vicious crimes against humanity being perpetrated with apparent impunity in Algeria. It is more than ironic that at a time when the world is preparing the groundwork for commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, countless thousands continue to be slaughtered like sheep on the altar of Algerian politics.

There has to be an immediate investigation into the atrocities so that their perpetrators can be identified, whoever they may be. In parallel with this, an initiative has to be taken with the aim to put a speedy end to these crimes. Those found responsible have to be apprehended and prosecuted before an international tribunal as human rights criminals. No statute of limitation must apply on these atrocities as is the case with war crimes.

Jordan, along with like-minded countries, can contribute to such an initiative by raising the issue in different international and regional fora. If there is a good cause for convening an Arab summit, it is now over the Algerian situation. We cannot expect the other nations to become engaged with Algeria until and unless we Arabs and Muslims play the leading role. There can be no excuse or justification for watching helplessly. Now is the time to act.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Sunday called on Jordan to reconsider its decision to attend the Turkish-Israeli-U.S. military exercises as an observer in order to safeguard its good relations with the Arab countries. Egypt, Syria, Iraq and other Arab states have displayed their dismay over Jordan's intended attendance at the joint exercises because they are firmly opposed to the Israeli-Turkish military axis and feel that this axis is an alliance directed against Syria and other Arab states in the region. Dr. Fanek said, Israel has an interest in these exercises which shows that Syria is within the Turkish-Israeli pincer's grip, while Turkey's interest is in posing a challenge to Greece which was instrumental in lobbying the European Union to reject Turkey's application to the EU, according to the writer. He said the U.S.'s interest in Jordan's participation is to show that its Middle East policies have not yet failed and that it still has friends in the region. Dr. Fanek said Jordan has no interest at all in these exercises and should reconsider its decision because otherwise the gap between the government of Jordan and the Jordanian people will continue to widen.

Al Ra'i's Sultan Al Hattab urged the concerned authorities to speed up investigations into the attack on the Iraqi commercial attaché in Amman saying that it is in the best national interest to expose those who are trying to mar relations between the two Arab countries. The attack came in the wake of a successful visit to Baghdad by the minister of energy and mineral resources who secured a new and very favourable deal for Jordan's imports of Iraqi oil under very concessional terms. Hattab said that whoever the perpetrators might be, they can only be the enemies of Jordan and Iraq which have just overcome the negative effects of the execution of the four Jordanians in Iraq and agreed to maintain contact over the fate of the remaining 150 Jordanian detainees in Iraqi jails. The writer said those behind the attack are clearly working to ruin good brotherly relations between Baghdad and Amman and derail Jordan's attempts at the international level to help lift the sanctions that are causing the Iraqi people anguish.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The pluses of being small and efficient

RECENTLY, AT a meeting of business leaders and industrialists, it struck me that there is something inherently wrong about the way Jordanian businesses define their relationship with the public sector. Businesses want the public sector to stay out of business, while concomitantly they want the government to protect Jordanian industries — preferably forever — from the onslaught of better-made, lower-priced foreign products. Their dream: inputs would be imported duty-free and foreign goods would be heavily taxed. However, they forget that what is an input to some is an output to others, and they tend to enjoy a selective type of amnesia when asked who is going to pay the high price of protectionism. This partnership/conspiracy of dependency, which they ask of the public sector is a product of years of having things done the old fashioned way, or more succinctly, the wrong way.

One example of the outcome of such a partnership is the obvious lack of efficiency in the private sector. According to a study by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 10-35 per cent of the amount of electrical energy consumed by the industrial sector could be saved, which would in turn, reduce Jordan's energy bill by JD60 million and possibly more. Given the 2.4 per cent oil price increase that is expected worldwide next year, reducing Jordan's energy bill would positively impact the balance of payments and strengthen the fundamental economic tenets upon which investment decisions are made.

I have blamed some of the inefficiency in the past on the fact that Jordan is dominated by small businesses and claimed that small businesses are not the long-term answer. They are simply short-term, second-best types of solutions. This view seems to have been resonated, albeit

indirectly, in an excellent study by Dr. Naseem Barham of the University of Jordan. The study determined that Jordan has only 319 establishments (5.8 per cent of the total number of establishments) which employ more than 100 workers, and 218 establishments (3.9 per cent) which employ between 50-99 employees. The number of establishments that employ 25-49 workers is 429 or 7.8 per cent of the total number of establishments, while 1,599 establishments (29 per cent) employ 10-24 workers each, and the remaining 2,949 (53.5 per cent) employ 5-9 workers per firm. In other words, 82.5 per cent of Jordanian firms can be classified as small (employ less than 25 workers); 7.8 per cent of the firms are viewed as medium (employ 25-49 workers); and 9.7 per cent are classified as large (employ over 50 workers). Therefore, the majority of Jordanian businesses are small.

If the domestic market does not care to compete, then and with very little government interference, the market should become open for foreign competition.

Why? Even though the Barham study does not address this question, it does point to several empirical findings which could be useful in identifying the answer. Businesses have started in Jordan via a quota system which bestowed import quotas upon individuals and families (this system which provides the ultimate form of protection to any industry and is banned by the World Trade

Organisation (WTO) and its predecessor the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). Also, most businesses (72.1 per cent) are either general partnerships or sole proprietorships, with most of the partnerships being family partnerships which makes lending to these enterprises very limited due to the high risk of this form of enterprise and therefore limits capital expansion options. Families tend to diversify their holdings, thus venturing into unrelated business activities (for example, one family went into textiles, vegetable oil and pharmaceuticals) instead of specialising and enhancing the competitiveness of their businesses by creating more value added (which would have created larger markets for Jordanian goods abroad). Much of the investment went into the construction industry which has been under the tutelage and control of the public sector thereby placing the investment role, indirectly, with the public sector. And finally, Jordanians start business late in life (38 years of age) compared to entrepreneurs located elsewhere in the region, possibly because they have to rely upon family resources and approval, which usually hinge upon whether the person is viewed by the family as mature or not.

The Jordanian industry needs more competition and less quotas and protection. If the domestic market does not care to compete, then and with very little government interference, the market should become open for foreign competition. Subsidies to businesses should become a thing of the past. And protectionism, in all its forms, should be removed from all aspects of Jordanian business: those who ask for greater taxes to be levied on some imports are actually asking consumer and nation to pay for their inefficiency.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah reroutes the ship of state

By Robin Wright

RIYADH — Two years after the Saudi monarch suffered a serious stroke, the kingdom has all but completed a quiet but decisive transition from ailing King Fahd to Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, a shift altering issues ranging from Gulf policies to U.S. relations, according to Western envoys in the kingdom and U.S. analysts.

"Abdullah, who was for decades a man of the future, has recently very much become the man of the hour," said a former U.S. official with continuing ties to the region.

"It's increasingly unacceptable to do important business without going to him first," the former official said. "Even important American correspondence is now signed by the crown prince for the king." Aramco is the Saudi state oil company.

Significant changes in policy are already visible, most notably in economic policy. There is now new emphasis on austerity previously unknown in the oil-producing nation — with a rippling impact on allies.

To help balance the budget, for example, Prince Abdullah is prepared to forgo some of the expensive U.S. military equipment and technology that poured into the kingdom for a quarter of a century — and channelled billions of petrodollars back into American coffers, according to the diplomats and analysts, who include former government officials.

The transition also is beginning to shift Saudi Arabia's approach to central diplomatic and security issues. As the kingdom reaches out diplomatically to engage regional rivals once viewed as threats, including Iran, Saudi Arabia ultimately could become less dependent on the U.S. military, the sources say.

"These have always been two very different

men," a Western envoy in Riyadh said about the king and his half-brother. "Enough time has now passed to be able to see the differences."

"Abdullah, who was for decades a man of the future, has recently very much become the man of the hour."

The crown prince was initially hesitant to make decisions for fear of crowding King Fahd, who temporarily appointed Prince Abdullah to act on his behalf after a stroke in 1995. The king is in his mid-70s. Prince Abdullah is just two years younger, but he is in far better health.

King Fahd officially resumed power several months after his stroke, but unofficially continued to rely on Prince Abdullah because of the king's health problems. "He has been suffering from memory loss and limited powers of concentration for years," said Simon Henderson, author of a report for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The king still receives visiting dignitaries: last month he met with the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. But diplomats say King Fahd's mental capabilities vary seriously.

Prince Abdullah is strongly in favour of security based on regional peace, even with long-standing rivals.

The transition increasingly will be felt in Washington, the sources say, although not necessarily in negative ways.

King Fahd, who masterminded the modernisation of the country, is largely responsible for upgrading relations and then linking

Saudi security to America.

Although major decisions usually involve family consensus, King Fahd widely is said to have

decided unilaterally in 1990, during talks with the U.S. defence secretary at the time, Dick Cheney, to allow half a million American troops into the kingdom after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The king also spent \$1 trillion to build a national infrastructure and a modern army almost from scratch. Central to those efforts were American corporations, including airplane makers, telecommunications companies, architects, health care and construction companies.

Saudi purchases became so critical to the U.S. arms industry that certain equipment, including one of the most modern tanks, would not have been cost-efficient without them.

In contrast to King Fahd, Prince Abdullah's main responsibility for the past 30 years has been commanding the National Guard, a force independent of the Defence Ministry that is partly charged with the kingdom's security and its economic installations.

Through U.S. trainers of the National Guard, he developed close ties to Washington. Several U.S. major generals have served as advisers to him, even during tense relations in the 1960s and 1970s.

Yet despite those rela-

Human Rights File High commissioner's lonely battle

By Waleed M. Sadi

MARY ROBINSON the new U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights has tried in vain to establish herself as a "doer" when it comes to human rights violations by taking on the recurrent crimes against humanity in Algeria and Rwanda. Her proposal to convene the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to debate the grim situation in Algeria was rebuffed by the commission's members, a setback from which the High Commissioner sought to recover. Mrs. Robinson's other initiative, in the wake of her first failure, was to try to convince the commission that the periodic atrocities being perpetrated in Algeria are an international concern by calling on Algeria to accept an international investigation of these slaughters of innocent people, including women and children.

On both counts she ruffled the feathers of the Algerian government which accused her of attempting to meddle in the country's internal affairs.

There is no doubt that the former president of Ireland, who took on the responsibility of heading the U.N. human rights efforts, has been acting in good faith and cannot understand why anybody including the Algerian authorities would object to her attempts to get to the bottom of the carnage. The merits of Mrs. Robinson's initiatives are clear enough. Systematic and grave human rights violations are not only domestic issues but also international concerns. The entire U.N. human rights machinery is founded on the growing jurisprudence that gross human rights violations are subject to international scrutiny. Otherwise there is really no justification for the U.N. system to create such an expensive machinery to look into human rights abuses. Throat slitting, on such a wide scale, is barbaric and inhuman and demands immediate and effective measures that have not yet been taken. The perpetrators are a pack of sub-humans who deserve the severest punishment. To witness watching the almost daily butchery without genuine reaction is really distressing.

The consent of states to international investigation is still the rule of thumb, but there will come a day when even state acceptance of international surveillance would not be necessary. The Algerian government has been trying to combat these killings but has failed to arrest these atrocities. Hardly a day passes without the world awakening to the shocking news of yet another wave of butchery in the north African Arab country. The Algerian government would have been well advised to cooperate with the High Commissioner since it too has a vested interest in preventing the garroting of its citizens, and apprehending and punishing the guilty. Failing to do so on its own the Algerian government should have been the first to seek help from international quarters. And what better U.N. agency is there to do that than the High Commissioner for Human Rights represented in its new face by the new head of the U.N. human rights machinery. A negative stance on the U.N. initiative is not really in the enlightened interest of Algeria.

Short of full cooperation from Algiers, still an international effort to put an end to the atrocities would be frustrated. Without the deployment of U.N. peace keeping forces, something which is clearly not in the cards even according to the High Commissioner's scenario, there is really very little that the U.N. can do at this stage. At best, U.N. observers can investigate the recurrent atrocities and identify the culprits. Even then, without the unrestricted cooperation and assistance of the authorities, any such investigation would be incomplete. This is where the consent and cooperation of the Algerian government is in question to any serious international effort to at least make a start in the effort to put an end to the carnage in Algeria. Unsuccessful in combatting the recurrence of crimes against humanity within its territory, Algiers should seek assistance from international quarters to at least begin an end to the bloodshed. This is the essence of Mrs. Robinson's case on the Algerian file.

LETTERS

'Reduced impact'

To the editor:

IT WAS disappointing to read so distinguished an academic as Dr. Kamal Salibi make so many factual mistakes in his article "CNN host shows non-concern for Christians of the Holy Land" (Jordan Times, Dec. 31, 1997). The Church Mission Society (CMS), of which we are members, has nothing to do with Christ Church in Jerusalem or with Rev'd Ray Lockhart. CMS has a distinguished history in the Near East, including founding the Ahliah ("CMS") School in Jordan. It has no sympathy with Zionist Christianity and has been supportive of many issues of justice throughout the world, including the Palestinian cause.

Furthermore, although we are pastors of expatriate congregations, we are certainly not part of the Church of England. Like Dr. Salibi, we are part of the Arab Episcopal Church, which is indeed overwhelmingly Arab. We are pleased to serve under Arab bishops and alongside Arab priests and Arab congregations.

We are as unhappy as Dr. Salibi with any non-concern for Palestinian Christians, but regret that the impact of his article was reduced by the inaccuracies mentioned above.

Rev'd John Chitham
Vicar, All Saints
Beirut

Rev'd Stephen Griffith
Chaplain to Syria

P.S. There is a double sadness in writing this letter. The natural person to write was Rev'd Derrick Hearn, Chaplain in Jordan. Sadly he died suddenly of a heart attack on Dec. 29th. May he rest in peace with the Lord he loved.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Saudis launch reforms to revive economy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Saudi cabinet's decision to privatise the Gulf kingdom's vast telecommunications sector will pave the way for similar operations in other sectors, Saudi economic experts have said.

"It is the first major reform measure in Saudi Arabia's successive development plans and I believe it would open the door for similar steps in other sectors," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, a prominent Saudi economist.

Mr. Huleika called the move "the beginning of the long-awaited reform programme announced by the government three years ago" to revive its oil-dependent economy and attract capital.

"It reflects (the government's) seriousness in implementing economic restructuring programmes and expand the role of the private sector in domestic development," he told AFP from Riyadh.

The Saudi cabinet decided to set up a joint-stock company in participation

with the private sector within six months to operate the country's telephone and telegraphic services.

The cabinet statement gave no details of the Saudi Arabian Telecommunication Company, but bankers expected the government to have a large shareholding in the venture given the vast investments needed for that sector.

Saudi Arabia, its economy hurt by fluctuating oil prices, approved a reformist five-year plan that started in 1995.

It said privatisation would include profitable sectors such as telecommunication, the postal service, airports, electricity, water and other services.

But the programme was delayed apparently after a surge in crude prices in the following two years filled its coffers and boosted the economy.

"Privatisations in Saudi Arabia will ease the financial burden on the government, secure financing for future projects and attract investment by the private sector which has huge

capabilities," Mr. Abu Huleika said.

"The decision is very significant as the telecommunication sector has a particular characteristic, which is that there should be continuous investments in it to ensure its viability and development," he added.

The decision coincided with plans to expand the telecommunication sector to face a rapid increase in demand due to growing population and business.

Between 1995 and 2000, nearly 1.5 million new telephone and telegraphic lines are planned on top of the current 1.7-million-line network.

The project will cost around \$4.5 billion while more than \$10 billion will have to be spent on other telecommunication projects until 2010. Tens of billions of dollars are also needed for expansion of other sectors.

Saudi Arabia, which has the biggest economy in the 22-member Arab League, is also planning to sell part of its national carrier, Saudia, to the private sector.

For this purpose, it has embarked on restructuring the airlines for it to operate on a commercial basis.

"There is a decision by the government that public enterprises which will be privatised should be profitable. It is a pre-requisite in the reform programme as this will encourage private contribution," a Saudi banker said.

Bankers said they expected the sell-offs in Saudi Arabia to fetch the government more than \$20 billion, ease its financial problems and allow it to channel more funds into other development projects.

"The decision on telecommunication is part of the country's programme to privatise government institutions," said Hamad Al Sayari, governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (central bank).

"It is intended to upgrade the efficiency of such services so they will run on a commercial basis, boost revenue and serve the national economy," he told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Itihad.

U.S. risks overheating, may have to cut rates — IMF

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. economy is growing at an unsustainable rate and federal reserve policy makers may be forced to raise interest rates in the near future to cool it off, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said.

In its Interim World Economic Outlook, the fund said there was little reason to expect growth in the world's top economy, now in the seventh year of an unbroken expansion, to slow significantly despite a raging financial crisis in Asia.

Interest rates would have to be raised if growth did "not slow to a sustainable pace," the report said. The IMF expects the U.S. economy to expand by 2.4 per cent this year after output grew an estimated 3.5 per cent in 1997.

"If it were not for the weakness in Asia and its expected effect on the U.S. economy, (because) what has clearly been an unsustainable path over the past one and a half years, the Fed would have tightened in November and December," IMF chief economist Michael Mussa told a news conference. "That would have been reasonable and prudent."

The U.S. central bank has left interest rates unchanged since March, when it bumped up the key overnight Fed funds rate by a quarter-percentage point to 5.5 per cent. It has since resisted from raising rates amid the expectation of a slowdown in growth and the apparent lack of strong inflation pressures.

For now, the IMF acknowledged that was the right policy, saying higher interest rates at this point risked unsettling already jittery global financial markets even more. The rate outlook for next year, however, depended on the extent to which the turmoil in Asia would affect the buoyant U.S. economy.

Already, the international community has put up more than \$100 billion in emergency help for South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, the hardest-hit of the former "Asian Tigers."

Lower demand from Asia is expected to put a lid on U.S. exports while also keeping inflation in check as producers from the region slash prices of goods they sell to the United States in a bid to gain market share.

If the turmoil in the region worsened, the IMF said policy makers in North America and Europe may actually have to lower rates to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control.

"In such a scenario, there could be a need for timely monetary easing to arrest an escalating downturn," it said. The report noted that the key risk for growth in the major developed nations, including the United States, was a worsening of financial problems besetting Japan, the world's number-two economy. "The key near-term risk for the advanced economies involves a possible intensification of the slowdown in Japan," it said.

Japan economy contracting — OECD

TOKYO (R) — Japan's economy, hit by slack domestic demand, the financial crisis across Asia and problems in its own financial sector, is in the midst of a contraction, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has said.

The OECD, noting the importance of Japan to the health of the rest of the 29-nation group, said things were bad enough in Japan earlier this year and that they had got worse.

The report, part of the annual survey of OECD nations, avoided the politically sensitive word "recession," instead saying: "In Japan, where the expansion that started in 1996 faltered during 1997, the recovery has become increasingly fragile."

It predicted, however, that the gross domestic product (GDP), the value of all economic output, would show a 0.7 per cent contraction (at an annual rate) for the second half of this year. That is one of the standard — although not definitive — definitions of a recession.

It said this slump would cut growth in the GDP to a mere 0.5 per cent this year, lower than the 0.8 per cent predicted in a

report issued in December and down sharply from the 2.3 per cent forecast in June.

It said the future did not look much brighter with growth projected at 1.7 per cent in 1998, down from the June forecast of 2.9 per cent. For 1999, it put growth at 2.1 per cent.

The OECD presented a now-familiar series of recommendations for the Japanese government: Shore up the banking sector with public funds, don't try so hard to quickly wipe out the government budget deficits and watch out for an ending squeeze that could hit small and medium-sized companies.

"In Japan, recent events have highlighted the underlying weaknesses of the financial sector. Already fragile balance sheet positions of some banks have been affected by falling equity prices, reinforcing the need for authorities to act promptly and effectively to restore confidence in the financial sector," said the report, written in early November before the collapse of number four broker Yamaichi Securities.

It weighed into an ongoing domestic political battle by saying that restoring

confidence would require "the use of government funds, as was the case in other OECD countries confronted with banking crises during the 1980s and early 1990s."

It noted that the fall in share prices had worsened the financial state of some banks since they could no longer cash in profits on shares to write off bad loans. It said that unless the government tackled the issue of the financial sector, lenders could become more cautious.

"This could result in difficulties for smaller and medium-sized companies dependent on credit for their expansion, so further weakening growth," the report said.

It also said that the government, which has been primarily concerned with cutting Japan's massive budget deficit, must be tuned to "secure the present recovery."

It suggested tax cuts now that could then later be offset by cuts in government spending. But it said such cuts should be permanent so that the traditionally thrifty Japanese resist the urge to put the money into savings instead of spending it because of their own worries about the future.

Egyptian parliament endorses income tax cuts

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's parliament has enacted legislation that reduces the maximum income tax rate to 40 per cent from 48 per cent, state television said.

The law also increases tax-free income allowances to a maximum of 3,000 pounds (\$584) from 1,680 pounds. The new tax rates range from 20 per cent on the first 2,000 pounds to 40 per cent on more than 16,000 pounds, the television said.

Finance Minister Mohamed Al Ghazib told parliament the changes were in line with "government policy to ease burdens on citizens, particularly low-income people, and encourage investment."

He said last week that the cuts would cost the treasury about 345 million pounds a year, but forecast that the gross tax receipts would not fall because of rising incomes.

Egypt's gross domestic product is expected to grow by at least 5.2 per cent in fiscal 1997/98 (July-June) from 5.1 per cent in 1996/97.

Egypt last changed its income tax structure in 1994.



InterContinental Jordan visits to the SOS Village and the Italian Hospital

PART OF the twelve days activities before Christmas, an InterContinental team visited the SOS Village. The team was headed by Mrs. Soper, wife of the hotel's general manager and the Public Relations Director Ms. Aslou.

They passed by the twelve homes in the village to wish everybody Merry Christmas & Happy New Year and thanked the mothers of these homes for the superb caring and attention given to the children.

Another team visited the Italian Hospital. The team thanked the hospital nurses and the management for their excellent service given to the Jordanian community.

The hotel presented the nursing staff with some small gifts and wished them all the success for the years to come.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Eight bits in a computer
- Touches up against
- Actress Gilbert
- Thoroughfare
- Dogma
- Hool beat
- Merial
- Selassie
- Famous cookie man
- So far
- Diamondback
- Sierra
- Shot
- 1921 Chaplin film
- Homesless leine
- Temporary residence
- Kilmer classic
- Botheration
- Braun and Gabor
- Ostrich relatives
- Traffic word in an octagon
- Aviv
- Pulverize
- Fireworks ingredient
- Dragon's mouth
- Bank employee
- Lubricant
- The Lost Galilee post
- Little Big Horn or Gettysburg
- Magnon
- On the briny
- Of ocean
- motion
- Highlander
- Formal dance
- Valuable discovery
- Smellery waste
- Big galoots
- Conger catcher
- The Four Seasons' star

DOWN

- Donkey's lament
- Time long past
- 3 Switch
- Sullivan and McMahon
- Conveniently placed
- Delects
- One condo
- Express with words
- Church tops
- Meager
- meter
- Whistle
- Church area
- Vex
- Takes to court
- Just gets by
- Eight letter of the Greek alphabet
- Crit starter?
- Type of stage
- Star part
- Open audition
- Love deeply
- Drunkard
- In this way
- Whirl of fortune?
- Dele deposit
- Mario's husband
- Nebbish
- Bottom lines
- More toty
- Toss
- All's last name
- memo-ase
- Phone opener?
- Give the ax
- Religious statue
- Be a bookworm
- Gymnast
- Korbut
- Young women's grp.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"Next time you blow in my ear, spit your gum out first!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

REMEG

NAIRY

TIDOAR

MILDIP

Print answer here: _____

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: UTTER BOGUS SHREWD PYTHON
Answer: What the philosopher turned over his head before submerging — "DEEP" THOUGHTS

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

MoGA starts planning for another two tunnels in downtown Amman

THE MUNICIPALITY of Greater Amman (MoGA) has begun the necessary studies to open a new vehicle tunnel from King Hussein Street / near the Ministry of Finance to Jabal Al Weibdeh / near Samir Rifai School at the entrance to Wadi Sagra Street. The project would complete the Wadi Al Haddadeh tunnel which the MoGA finished last year at a cost exceeding JD3.5 million.

According to a source at MoGA the two-lane tunnel will be 600 metres long and 13.40 metres wide. The cost of constructing the tunnel is expected to be around JD5 million excluding various other costs.

Internal dispute rocks merger discussions between insurance companies

DESPITE HAVING the approval of their general assemblies, four insurance companies have failed to merge. Informed sources said that unexpected internal disputes on who would be running the new entities, have cut short the merger discussions before reaching the final stages. Other internal sources attributed the failure to merge on disagreements between the parties and on differences regarding fundamental issues that were agreed upon at the start of the negotiations.

The next step that the companies have to follow now is to call for an extraordinary

After completing this tunnel, the source added, MoGA will start construction of another tunnel that will cross Jabal Amman. The second tunnel, which will also be 600 metres long will start near the entrance to Wadi Sagra street / Samir Rifai School and stretch to Ras Al Ain / Omar Matar Street.

The three tunnels (Wadi Al Haddadeh, Jabal Al Weibdeh and Jabal Amman) will form a central ring-road that can be used as an alternative to the downtown roads which presently face daily traffic jams (Al Rai'i).

meeting of their general assemblies to cancel the decisions to merge and to approve raising their capital by capitalising reserves.

According to Raouf Abu Jaber, president of the Jordanian Federation of Insurance Companies, a row has killed the proposed merger between the Arab Union International Insurance Company and the Yarmouk Insurance and Reinsurance Company. The other failed merger was to have been between the Jordan Gulf Insurance Company and the Universal Insurance Company (Al Rai'i).

Aqel sees EU partnership accord creating unfair competition for local financial institutions

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The partnership deal that Jordan signed with the European Union (EU) in November will create unfair competition between European and local financial institutions "which have limited sources of technical experience and knowledge," a recent study has revealed.

Mifteh Aqel, regional manager at the Arab Bank, indicated in the study that the European potential to own foreign financial establishments in Jordan will result in having control over a number of local institutions.

"This will create unequal competition that will not be in favour of Jordanian banks," said Mr. Aqel.

On the other hand, such a step will lead to an inflow of capital, technical expertise, higher standards of

finance and services — inducing local establishments to follow suit.

According to the study, a free trade market will also create industrial competition due to extensive use of technology, especially that the EU is seeking new markets to reinforce its exports.

"Our inability to compete will weaken the industrial sector, and as a result, banks will face serious debt problems," Mr. Aqel wrote.

To face these challenges, the study stressed the need to strengthen the financial sources of these institutions.

"We also need to speed up issuing the rest of the laws related to financial institutions in Jordan," Mr. Aqel added.

The study also stressed the need for qualified managers to enable them to face the free market.

In addition, he called for joint investments in the

areas of technology and communications and for the introduction and expansion of modern banking tools.

He said the move towards market liberalisation and free trade was becoming an international trend. "We have to follow that trend while ensuring minimum damage," he emphasised.

He said he was not advocating ideas to combat greater openness "because this will keep us out of 85 per cent of the international economy."

"But we have to draw lessons from the experience of South Asian countries. Openness has to go hand-in-hand with the completion of financial reform policies so that we have strong financial institutions capable of facing the challenges of economic globalisation and greater openness," Mr. Aqel concluded.

Jordan's second Islamic bank will open for business on Feb. 1

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's second Islamic commercial bank will open its gates to the public on Feb. 1, a spokesman for the bank said Sunday.

The Islamic International Arab Bank (IIAB), a subsidiary of Arab Bank which is the Kingdom's largest financial institution, will have a JD40 million capital, its director general Jamil Dasouqi said.

The bank's four branches, one in Irbid and the rest in Amman, will operate according to Islamic Sharia rules.

"This means the bank will not pay interest for the money it receives from the clients or for loans they take from the bank," Mr. Dasouqi told the Jordan Times.

"The success of Islamic banks in the Arab and Muslim World, and the many requests we received from our clients in the Arab Bank to launch such a venture, prompted this step," Mr. Dasouqi added.

The Holy Koran outlawed "Riba" — which has been translated to mean interest or usury.

The IIAB will operate according to several Islamic financial rules such as Murabaha, Mudaraba, Ijara, Musharka and Silim when doing business.

The Islamic Development Bank, Jordan's first financial institution to implement Sharia rules, began operations across the Kingdom several years back.

"We are optimistic that we

will succeed in our venture because IIAB was created upon demand from our clients who trust our work," said Mr. Dasouqi.

Islamic banks allow joint ventures, partnership and profit-sharing agreements which big Western banks, with their global reach, can sometimes execute better than traditional Islamic institutions.

Mustaq Parker, the publisher of the London-based Islamic Banker Magazine, said in December that Islamic banks across the globe were a "growing niche market."

He said some \$100 billion were invested in Islamic banking accounts worldwide and predicted an annual growth rate of 12 per cent or more.

Islamic financing actually has its roots in the caravan trade that used to ply the Arabian deserts.

Wealthy merchants would put up the money for traders to buy and transport goods, profiting from a successful caravan or losing heavily if it was seized by bandits or lost in the desert.

Prophet Mohammed, himself a merchant, accepted this system and rejected the alternative which was financing by money lenders at a very high rate.

About 75 retail Islamic banks operate worldwide, with Malaysia and Turkey among the strongest markets.

In Iran and Sudan, two countries with Islamic regimes, all domestic transactions are governed by Islamic banking rules.

Largest Arab bank to lay off staff in restructuring plan

MANAMA (AFP) — The Arab world's largest banking group, Arab Banking Corporation (ABC), Saturday announced it was to lay off staff in a restructuring plan aimed at streamlining its operations.

The group will restructure around two main bodies, the banking unit and the investment unit, ABC said in a press release from its headquarters in Bahrain.

ABC's Arab and international banking operations will be consolidated within the banking unit, and the Investment Group will take charge of ABC's portfolio of investments, under the plan conceived with the participation of U.S. firm Arthur Andersen, said the press release.

"The implementation of the plan will result in the consolidation of a number of functions within the bank, with a consequent reduction in staff," it added, without specifying the projected number of lay-offs.

The restructuring has been decided after weak results posted by the group which only achieved \$116 million in net profit in 1995, representing only 0.55 per cent return on assets, estimated at \$23 billion in 1996. ABC is owned by the governments of Kuwait, Libya, the emirate of Abu Dhabi and private investors. It specialises in the financing of trade between Arab countries and the rest of the world.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8020	0.6079	1.4636	132.35	1.4260	1774.64	2.0302	6.0300
DE Mark	0.5549	-	0.3370	0.8121	73.42	0.7909	984.27	1.2666	3.3459
GB Sterling	1.6450	2.9645	-	2.4086	217.15	2.3458	2919.28	3.3397	9.9194
CH Franc	0.6832	1.2304	0.4148	-	50.39	0.9736	1211.69	1.3841	4.1172
JP Yen	0.0076	1.3610	0.4589	1.1054	-	1.0770	13.40	153.34	4.5544
CA Dollar	0.7013	1.2632	0.4258	1.0260	1.08	-	1244.05	1.4232	4.2271
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0148	0.3422	0.0824	1342.82	0.8032	-	11.43	3.3962
NL Guilder	0.4926	88.72	0.2991	72.68	66.14	0.7020	873.89	-	2.3687
FR Franc	0.1658	0.2987	0.1007	24.2599	21.92	0.2364	33.65	33.6500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	0.7085	3.7504	0.0000	0.0000	0.3055	3.6723	1522.00	3.3890
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	-	5.2934	0.0000	0.0000	0.4312	5.1841	2148.20	4.7833
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	-	0.0000	0.0000	0.0816	0.98	405.82	0.5036
Bahrain Dinar	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101
Qatar Dinar	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101	0.0101
Kuwait Dinar	0.2733	2.3181	12.2763	0.0000	0.0000	0.0832	12.02	4982.00	0.0101
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	1.0211	0.0000	0.0000	0.0832	12.02	4982.00	0.0101
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4655	2.4641	0.0000	0.0000	0.2007	2.4132	-	2.2267
Egyptian	0.2951	0.2091	1.1056	0.0000	0.0000	0.0901	1.0838	448.10	-

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0816	0.98	405.82	0.5036
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.49089	1.6561	0.39876	36.0477	-	-	-	-
KW Dinar	0.2733	5.80319	1.99005	4.79386	433.463	-	-	-	-
BH Dinar	0.0000	4.74608	1.56	3.85802	344.69	-	-	-	-
CY Pound	1.8867	3.3998	1.1462	2.7614	249.705	-	-	-	-

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Period	1-M	3-M	6-M	9-M	1-Yr	Period	1-M	3-M	6-M
USD	5.56	5.68	5.72	5.75	5.81	USD	5.56	5.68	5.72
JPY	0.37	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.37	JPY	0.37	0.31	0.31
DEM	2.43	3.56	3.70	3.75	3.81	DEM	2.43	3.56	3.70
FRF	3.44	3.58	3.68	3.78	3.87	FRF	3.44	3.58	3.68
CHF	1.11	1.34	1.51	1.53	1.59	CHF	1.11	1.34	1.51
ITL	5.91	5.79	5.67	5.25	5.10	ITL	5.91	5.79	5.67

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency	Buy	Sell	Currency
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	US Dollar	0.708	0.710	US Dollar	0.708	0.710	US Dollar
GB Sterling	1.1644	1.1702	GB Sterling	1.1644	1.1702	GB Sterling	1.1644	1.1702	GB Sterling
DE Mark	0.3924	0.3944	DE Mark	0.3924	0.3944	DE Mark	0.3924	0.3944	DE Mark
CH Franc	0.4832	0.4856	CH Franc	0.4832	0.4856	CH Franc	0.4832	0.4856	CH Franc
FR Franc	0.1173	0.1178	FR Franc	0.1173	0.1178	FR Franc	0.1173	0.1178	FR Franc
JP Yen	0.5344	0.5371	JP Yen	0.5344	0.5371	JP Yen	0.5344	0.5371	JP Yen
NL Guilder	0.3485	0.3502	NL Guilder	0.3485	0.3502	NL Guilder	0.3485	0.3502	NL Guilder
IT Lira	0.3984	0.4004	IT Lira	0.3984	0.4004	IT Lira	0.3984	0.4004	IT Lira

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHWEISANI										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607178										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 04/01/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW									
346,000	249,000	ARAB BANK	14.9	1.23	5	220	71280	322.00	324.00	2.00+
M 2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	3	11600	20416	1.76	1.76	
S 3,540	1,670	BANK OF JORDAN	5.6	0.00	2	28912	50885	1.68	1.76	.08+
1,300	890	W.D. EAST INV. BK.	85.4	0.00	1	25000	32500	1.30	1.30	-
3,300	4,650	THE HOUSING BK.	15.7	0.00	7	3244	16984	5.20	5.25	.05+
4,180	1,850	JOR. KAWAT BANK	10.6	0.00	8	2610	5178	2.03	1.99	.04-
4,190	2,520	JOR. GULF BANK	21.3	0.00	5	86000	5676	2.96	2.96	.01+
S 4,050	2,250	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	21.3	0.00	4	40000	118400	6.65	6.66	-
		JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	11.7	4.17	2	245	563	2.25	2.30	.05+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 231.48 %CHG: +0.65 39 120506 322078										
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.18	8	11400	22002	1.93	1.93	-
8,800	7,900	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	12.6	1.25	3	10050	88528	8.80	8.80	-
3,560	2,450	HINER MINERALS	17.1	4.62	1	576	155	3.56	3.38	.18-
1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	5	34650	34650	1.00	1.00	-
1,980	470	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	21.0	0.00	1	1850	599	1.42	1.41	.01-
7,100	3,800	AD-OOSTER	29.9	3.43	1	5250	37275	7.10	7.10	-
1,600	1,150	MTO. EAST HOSTS	19.2	0.00	1	5000	6300	1.29	1.26	.03-
4,000	7,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.3	0.00	16	7100	28124	3.95	3.95	-
1,050	740	JORDAN EXPT. INV.	9	0.00	1	150	143	1.00	.95	.05-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.34 %CHG: -0.09 37 75660 218456										
1,160	930	ATTANQUEER	9	0.00	1	4000	4640	1.16	1.16	-
4,450	2,750	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.1	1.68	18	3363	9866	3.02	2.99	.03-
11,160	9,700	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.0	8.59	9	862	8955	10.45	10.35	.10-
4,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. PHAF.	11.4	4.83	20	6575	7253	4.14	4.14	-
2,940	2,200	JORDAN OILRY	9.4	8.73	2	59	165	2.83	2.80	.03-
4,750	4,750	JOR. PRINT & PACK.	9	0.00	2	3988	18468	4.75	4.75	-
3,330	2,700	JOR. PAPER CARBON.	15.8	0.00	1	9600	26880	2.80	2.80	-
2,700	1,800	GENERAL MINING	9	0.00	3	8292	18571	2.18	2.00	-
6,000	4,400	GAR ALDANA OV. INV.	13.8	4.42	6	3000	17068	5.68	5.65	.03-
3,700	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.9	9.88	1	100	253	2.66	2.53	.13-
650	440	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.5	0.00	1	500	225	1.44	1.45	.01+
720	510	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	1	5000	2980	.99	.99	-
1,150	390	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	5.68	10	5000	1895	3.39	3.37	.02-
2,920	1,380	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	15.9	5.68	1	3000	5280	1.76	1.76	-
4,610	2,700	ALADILY CO.	26.4	2.54	1	7500	23625	1.15	1.15	-
5,500	5,500	JOR. WOOD IND. JHICO	29.9	1.82	1	6750	37125	5.50	5.50	-
1,300	860	JOR. GLASS-CHEN	9	0.00	6	1500	815	1.30	1.30	-
1,610	1,150	ARAB PHARM. CHEN	14.7	6.09	39	345	115	1.15	1.15	-
1,360	1,360	JORDAN POUL. PROC.	93.3	0.00	3	25000	34000	1.36	1.36	-
1,800	820	UNIV. MOD. INDUS.	26	8	2500	2050	.82	.82	-	.01-
1,620	1,140	NATL. CHLORINE	13.8	4.78	3	15028	27141	1.46	1.46	-
970	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	1	500	445	.89	.89	-
1,310	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	3	4000	4793	1.20	1.18	.02-
.840	.570	MIO. EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	1	300	183	.61	.61	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.16 %CHG: -0.31 105 116617 267733										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 168.74 %CHG: +0.25 181 312781 808266										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 04/01/1998										
.610	.340	JOR. TRAOE FAC.	9.3	0.00	2	750	263	.35	.35	-
8,800	.660	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	4	12700	2840	.70	.70	-
.570	.360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	25000	11750	.47	.47	-
N 1,000	1,000	JOR. INV. INVEST. CO.	8	0.00	1	250	238	1.00	.95	.05-
.750	.350	NATL. MULT. SEC. NAMCO	9	0.00	3	4000	2064	.49	.48	.01-
.640	.350	NATYAZ OIES & MOULDS	9	0.00	1	200	120	.36	.36	-
.660	.580	MIDESTAT PHARM. 75	8	0.00	3	5150	2009	.68	.69	.01+
.730	.550	INDUS. PHARM.	8	0.00	8	10000	6000	.65	.64	.01-
470	.270	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	3	325	325	.27	.26	.01-
.820	.490	NATL. POLYMER	8	0.00	8	3950	2054	.53	.52	.01-
N 1,000	.660	NATL. ALUMINIUM. 75	93.2	0.00	6	5550	2336	.70	.67	.03-
GRAND TOTAL 41 69500 30698										
* New 12 months low										
S Stock dividend during the past 12 months										
N Listed during the past 12 months										
P P/E ratio is 100 or more										
+ Negative P/E										
E Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year										

Early touchdown seals 7-6 win for Steelers

PITTSBURGH (AFP) — Kordell Stewart raced 40 yards for a touchdown early in the first quarter and Pittsburgh made it stand up in a 7-6 victory over New England Sunday in the National Football League playoffs.

The Steelers forced four turnovers, including two in the last two minutes, and advanced to the American Conference championship game for the third time in four years.

Pittsburgh either will host Devoer or visit Kansas City in the battle for the AFC title — and a Super Bowl berth — on January 11.

The Chiefs were to host the Broncos in their second-round game on Sunday.

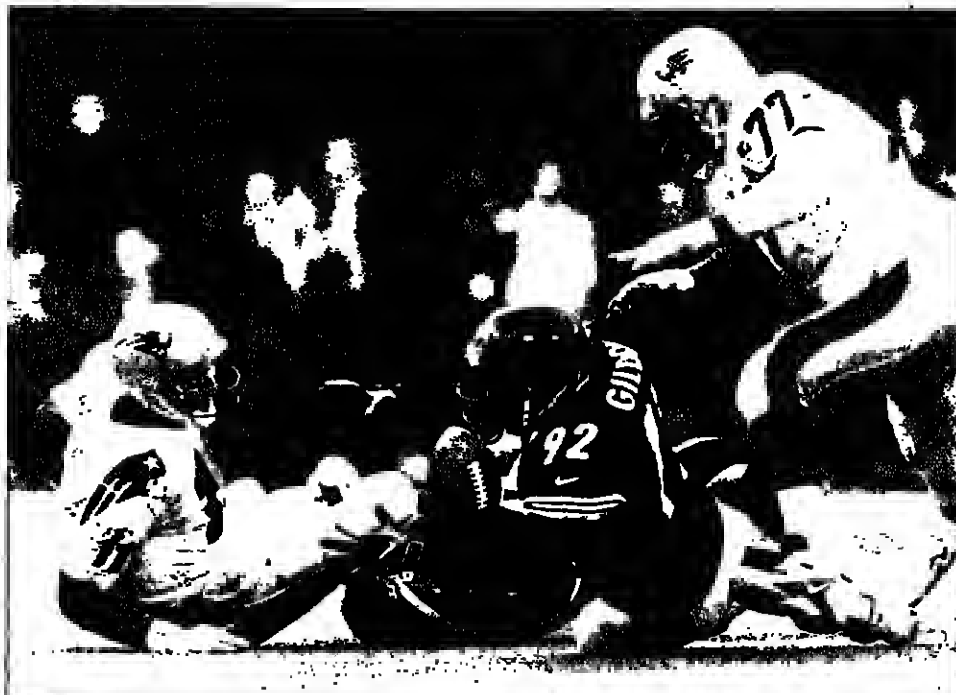
New England was limited to a pair of field goals by Adam Vinatieri and fell two games short of a return to the Super Bowl in their first season under coach Pete Carroll.

The Patriots had pounced on the Steelers at New England in this same round of the playoffs en route to the Super Bowl last year.

Linebacker Jason Gildon recovered a pair of fumbles for the Steelers, who won for the 22nd time in their last 24 games at Three Rivers Stadium, including a 4-0 playoff mark in that span.

The second recovery came after backup left end Mike Vrabel stripped quarterback Drew Bledsoe of the ball and Gildon pounced on it at the Pittsburgh 34 with 1:44 to play.

"With the situation we were in, that was the biggest play of my career and hopefully there will be more in



Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker Jason Gildon (92) recovers a fumble by New England Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe (1) late in the fourth quarter of their AFC playoff game at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as Patriots Zefross Moss (77) moves in too late to help. Bledsoe fumbled the ball on a sack by Steelers defensive end Mike Vrabel (96). The fumble ended the Patriots late drive to score as they lost to the Steelers 7-6 (Reuters photo)

the future," said Vrabel.

The Patriots got back the ball in the final seconds before linebacker Levon Kirkland intercepted a long pass by Bledsoe to seal the win. Bledsoe completed 23-of-44 passes for 264 yards and was intercepted twice.

"Our defence played hard all game, particularly early when we didn't have field position," said Steelers coach Bill Cowher. "I thought we came up with some big plays."

The Patriots were able to contain Jerome Bettis, who was held to 67 yards on 25 carries after rushing for 1,665 yards in the regular

season.

But they could not muster enough offense and lost in their sixth straight visit to Pittsburgh.

"Those guys said to themselves, we're not going to let the Steelers run the football," Bettis said.

"They had eight guys on the line and the linebackers just three yards back."

Stewart was the Steelers' leading rusher with 68 yards on 11 carries and completed 14-of-31 passes for 134 yards with one interception.

The Patriots again played without leading rusher Curtis Martin, who missed his fifth straight game with

groin and abdominal injuries. Tight end Ben Coates, wide receiver Terry Glenn and kick returner David Meggett also saw limited duty due to injury.

The Steelers struck early when Stewart scampered around left end and raced for a touchdown on the team's opening possession with 9:49 left in the first quarter.

The drive included a pair of 10-yard passes from Stewart to Charles Johnson and began after rookie cornerback Chad Scott intercepted Bledsoe and returned it 27 yards to the Steelers 38.

49ers beat Vikings

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP)

— Steve Young threw for 224 yards and a touchdown and linebacker Ken Norton returned an interception for a score as San Francisco routed Minnesota 38-22 Saturday in the National Football League playoffs.

San Francisco will host either Tampa Bay or defending Super Bowl champion Green Bay next week in a battle for the National Conference title and a Super Bowl berth.

It will be the seventh NFC title appearance in 10 years for the 49ers, the first since the 1994 season when they went on to win their fifth Super Bowl crown.

Mixing precision passing with an effective running game led by Terry Kirby, Young directed four touchdown drives, capping the third one with a 15-yard pass to Terrell Owens for a 31-14 lead with two minutes left in the third quarter.

Just 47 seconds after the 49ers had grabbed the lead for good on Kirby's one-yard touchdown run, Norton stepped in front of a lazy pass by Minnesota's Randall Cunningham and raced 23 yards untouched into the end zone for a 21-7 lead with 5:41 left in the second quarter.

Young completed 21-of-30 passes without an interception and also ran for 37 yards. Kirby, starting for injured 1,000-yard rusher Garrison Hearst, picked up 120 yards on 25 carries, including another one-yard scoring burst with 7:32 to play.

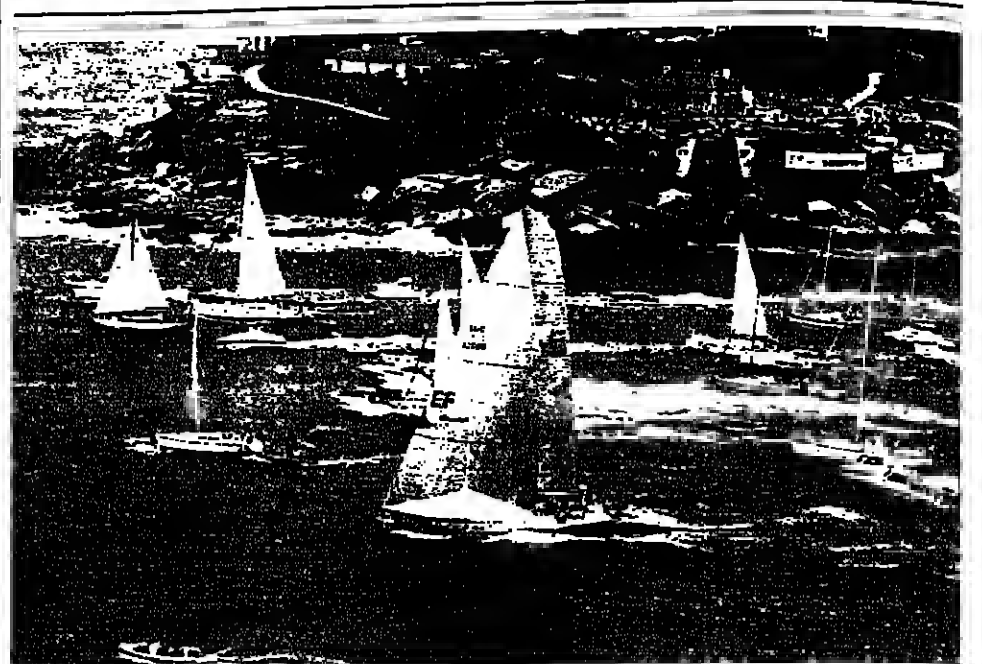
Anand beats Karpov in 2nd game for FIDE crown

LAUSANNE (AFP) — Viswanathan Anand of India defeated Russian master Anatoly Karpov here on Saturday night in the second game of the World Chess Federation (FIDE) championship tournament.

The win took the score to one game each in the six-game final in which Karpov is defending his crown. Karpov won the first game on Friday.

The two grand masters are due to play their third game on Sunday.

The tournament is taking place at the Olympic Museum on the shores of Lake Geneva and is due to run until January 9. A tie-break will be played if the six games result in a draw. The winner of the tournament will pocket \$1.37 million. The loser gets \$768,000.



Swedish Yacht EF Language skippered by American Paul Cayard is surrounded by chase boats as it passes Sydney Harbour Heads while leading after the start of the fourth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race boats, January 4. The leg, from Sydney to Auckland in New Zealand covers 1,270 nautical miles (Reuters photo)

Swedish yacht leads Whitbread after Toshiba blows start

SYDNEY (AFP)

— Swedish yacht EF Language led the nine-yacht fleet after four-times America's Cup winner Dennis Conner jumped the gun at the start of the fourth leg of the Whitbread Round-the-World race here Sunday.

EF Language, skippered by American Paul Cayard and leading the points table, exited Sydney Harbour with British entry Silk Cut just 17 seconds behind as the fleet began the 1,270 nautical mile trip to Auckland, in New Zealand.

Norway's Innovation Kvaerner rounded the mark in third place, 30 seconds behind EF Language and closely followed by Swedish Match.

A number of yachts had difficulty unfurling their headsails, including

Swedish Match, Chessie Racing and Merit Cup.

All nine are identical Whitbread 60s designed specifically for the 31,600 nautical mile race.

Conner, chairman of the Toshiba/Team Dennis Conner syndicate, had decided to skipper the yacht only two days before the start of the fourth leg. But he was forced to trail the fleet after being recalled from a false start.

As the fleet headed into the Pacific, EF Language still led Silk Cut, Innovation Kvaerner, Swedish Match, Merit Cup and Brunel Suncor while Chessie Racing and Conner's Toshiba passed EF Education to take seventh and eighth positions.

The all-female crew of EF Education also had headsail trouble which gave Conner

the chance to move up the order by one boat.

"I think the guys showed they have the potential to sail with the leaders, having led four of the five days in the last leg and I think overall they did a pretty damned good job," Conner said.

Thousands crowded the cliffs at the harbour entrance while a spectator fleet swelled to about 300 craft as the yachts manoeuvred for an hour and a half before the start.

The seventh Whitbread race started in Southampton, England, on September 21 and the race leaders are expected to cross the finish line back in Southampton in late May.

The fleet is expected to complete the 1,270 nautical mile leg to Auckland in five days.

Australia crush Sweden in Hopman Cup

PERTH (AFP) — Australia swept to a 3-0 victory over Sweden at the start of the A\$900,000 (\$587,000) Hopman Cup tennis mixed teams tournament at Burswood Dome here Sunday.

Annabel Ellwood scored an upset win over the higher-ranked Asa Carlsson in the women's singles before World No. 2 Patrick Rafter overcame Thomas Enqvist in the men's singles.

Ellwood won in straight sets 6-4, 6-4, while Rafter outlasted Enqvist 6-3, 1-6, 7-5 in 94 minutes.

Theo, in the "dead" mixed doubles, Rafter and Ellwood beat the Swedish pair 6-2, 6-4.

Ellwood, 19, is ranked only 93rd, compared with Carlsson's 45th position.

But the young Australian romped to victory after overcoming a nightmare start in which she trailed 0-3 in the opening set.

Coquering her nervousness, Ellwood fought back resolutely to wrap up the set in 43 minutes.

With that success under her belt, the Australian stormed home in only 41 minutes in the second set.

Ellwood said later: "I was extremely nervous and it was good to get a win on the board — one of my best wins. Truly, I did not expect to win. Happily, the pressure is off me now."

In the men's singles, Rafter began in dynamic style, breaking his opponent in the fourth game and winning the first set in



Patrick Rafter

only 24 minutes.

But Enqvist, ranked 28th, rallied superbly in the second set, breaking Rafter's service in the second, fourth and sixth games as he levelled at one set each.

In the decisive third set, Enqvist broke service in the opening game, and held his own serve to lead 2-0, but Rafter broke back to the fourth and 12th games to beat a gallant opponent.

Rafter, playing in

Australia for the first time since winning the U.S. Open last year, said: "I felt really good in the first set, and then my intensity dropped. I was very lucky to get back into it."

He said he still needed a few more matches to be at peak fitness.

"People are thinking I am some sort of genius (after the U.S. Open win), but I am just the same player," he said. "So there was a bit of nervousness at the start today."

SCOREBOARD

Australian women's hardcourt championship

1st round
Maria Vento (Ven) Magu Serna (Spa)
6-3, 6-4
Patty Schnyder (Swi) Rita Grande (Ita)
6-4, 6-4
Elena Likhovtseva (Rus) Olga Barabanschikova (Bel)
2-6, 6-1, 6-1

Hopman Cup

Australia bt Sweden 3-0

Patrick Rafter Thomas Enqvist

6-3, 1-6, 7-5

Women's singles

Annabel Ellwood Asa Carlsson

6-4, 6-4

Mixed doubles

Rafter/Ellwood Enqvist/Carlsson

6-2, 6-4

NBA

Indiana 89 Toronto 77

Cleveland 95 New Jersey 81

Chicago 105 Detroit 96

San Antonio 84 Miami 77

New York 88 Orlando 84

Minnesota 109 Denver 87

Portland 97 Houston 95

Boston 106 Milwaukee 99

Utah 97 Atlanta 82

LA Clippers 97 Dallas 88

Spanish league

Betis 3 Real Madrid 2

English Third Round FA Cup matches plus English

and Scottish League matches:

Arsenal 0 Port Vale 0

Barnsley 1 Bolton 0

Blackburn 4 Wigan 2

Bristol Rovers 1 Ipswich 1

Cardiff 1 Oldham 0

Charlton 4 Nottm Forest 1

Crewe 1 Birmingham 2

Crystal Palace 2 Scunthorpe 0

Derby 2 Southampton 0

Grimsby 3 Norwich 0

Leeds 4 Oxford Utd 0

Leicester 4 Northampton 0

Liverpool 1 Coveyry 3

Man City 2 Bradford 0

Portsmouth 2 Astor Villa 2

Preston 1 Stockport 2

QPR 2 Middlesbrough 2

Rotherham 1 Sunderland 5

Sheff Utd 1 Bury 1

Swindon 1 Stevenage 2

Watford 1 Sheff Wed 1

West Ham 2 Emley 1



Thomas Sykora of Austria passes a gate on the first run of the men's World Cup slalom race in Kranjska Gora on January 4. Sykora won the race with a combined time of one minute 37.93 seconds (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA "1" George Clooney & Nicole Kidman ... in THE PEACEMAKER Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA "2" Mickey Rourke & Angie Everhart ... in ANOTHER 9-1/2 WEEKS Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA SCREAM Shows: 12:00, 6:30 AL MASEER (Arabic) Nour Al Sharif Shows: 8:30, 10:45 HERCULES Shows: 2:00 p.m.	CONCORD CONCORD "1" MR. BEAN Shows: 12:15, 2:15 MURDER 1600 Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" MR. BEAN Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN Demi Moore ... in THE JUROR Shows: 8:30, 10:30 GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Shows: 2:00, 6:30	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN Jim Carie... in THE CABLE GUY Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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Portland defeat Houston; Atlanta lose

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Rik Smits, the only Indiana starter who played in the fourth quarter, had 24 points and 13 rebounds as the Pacers beat the Toronto Raptors 89-77 Saturday night.

It was Indiana's 11th straight victory over Toronto, which has never beaten the Pacers in its three-year NBA existence.

The Indiana bench, led by Travis Best with 11 points and Fred Hoiberg with 10, combined for 43 points and accounted for all but three of the Pacers' points in the fourth quarter.

John Wallace led Toronto with 18 points.

San Antonio Spurs 84, Miami Heat 77: In Miami, David Robinson had 27 points and 12 rebounds and the San Antonio Spurs won for the 10th time in 11 games, beating the Miami Heat in a battle of division leaders.

Miami centre Alonzo Mourning missed the final quarter after suffering a cut in his left palm that required seven stitches. He was back on the bench with four minutes remaining but didn't return to the game.

Tim Duncan had 22 points and 11 rebounds for San Antonio, which began the night tied with Utah for first place in the Midwest Division.

Mourning scored 18 points in 32 minutes for Atlantic Division leader Miami, but had no rebounds in the first half and finished with just five.

Cleveland Cavaliers 95, New Jersey Nets 81: In Cleveland, Shawn Kemp had 21 points and 10 rebounds, dominating rookie Keith Van Horn and leading the Cleveland Cavaliers over the New Jersey Nets.

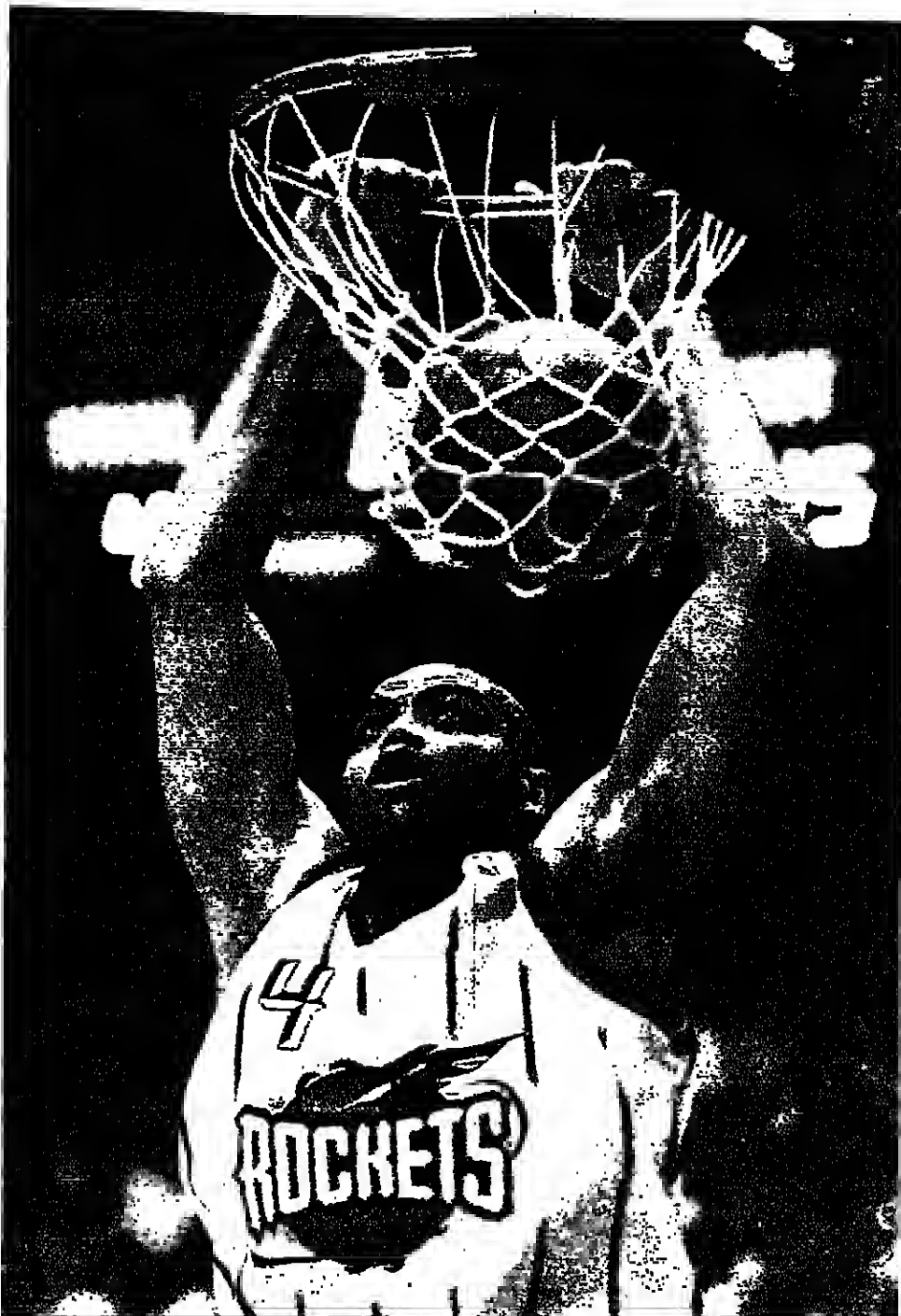
Kemp took control of a turnover-plagued game in the closing minutes of the third period and held Van Horn to 15 points on 5-for-16 shooting.

Derek Anderson had 18 points, seven assists and six rebounds for Cleveland, while Cedric Henderson scored 17 points for the Cavs.

Van Horn, the No. 2 pick in the NBA draft who was averaging 21.5 points, started 2-for-11 from the field. Kemp was 10-for-14 and recorded the 1,000th block of his career — against Van Horn.

Chicago Bulls 105, Detroit Pistons 96: In the Detroit suburb of Auburn Hills, Michael Jordan scored 34 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 18 rebounds as the Chicago Bulls beat the Detroit Pistons.

Rodman now has 10,822 career rebounds, moving him into 20th on the NBA's career rebounding list past



Houston Rockets' Charles Barkley slams past the Portland Trail Blazers during first quarter action. The Rockets were hosting the Blazers at the Compaq Center in Houston (Reuters photo)

Jack Sikma (10,816).

Ron Harper scored 21 points for the Bulls, while Toni Kukoc added 13.

Grant Hill led the Pistons with 31 points, seven rebounds and six assists. Jerry Stackhouse added 22 points and Joe Dumars 17.

New York Knicks 88, Orlando Magic 84: In New York, Allan Houston drove around Gerald Wilkins and made a running bank shot over Rony Selkaly's outstretched arm with 31.8 seconds left, deflating Orlando's comeback and leading the New York Knicks past the Magic.

It was the Knicks' third win in five games since losing Patrick Ewing to a season-ending wrist injury. Ewing sat on the home bench for the first time since the injury with his right arm in a heavy cast.

Chris Mills scored a season-high 20 points, including 16 in the first half, and Houston added 15 for the Knicks, who opened a six-game homestand.

Rony Selkaly led the Magic with 28 points. Nuggets 87: In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett got his first NBA triple-double as Minnesota handed Denver its 13th straight loss.

Garnett had 18 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for the first triple-double by a Minnesota player since Michael Williams did it on Dec. 19, 1992.

Sam Mitchell scored 18

points off the bench for the Wolves, who played a nearly flawless first quarter en route to their fifth victory in six games.

Harold Ellis scored 16 points for the Nuggets, whose record fell to an NBA-worst 2-28.

Portland Trail Blazers 97, Houston Rockets 95: In Houston, Brian Grant rebounded his own miss and sank a five-foot jumper with eight seconds left, giving the Portland Trail Blazers a victory over the Houston Rockets.

The Rockets beat Denver in overtime on Friday night, but they couldn't pull this one out despite 34 points by Clyde Drexler and a clutch shot by Mario Elie in the final minute.

After Grant put Portland up by two, Houston had a chance to tie. But Drexler missed a shot with 2.4 seconds remaining.

Isiah Rider led the Blazers with 27 points.

Utah Jazz 97, Atlanta Hawks 82: In Salt Lake City, Karl Malone scored 20 points, and John Stockton had 19 points and 12 assists as Utah handed Atlanta its seventh straight loss.

Steve Smith led the Hawks with 20 points, although his final seven

came late in the fourth period with the game decided.

Atlanta's losing streak is its longest since the 1991-92 season.

Boston Celtics 106, Milwaukee Bucks 99: In Milwaukee, Antoine Walker scored a season-high 32 points and had 10 rebounds as Boston rallied to beat Milwaukee.

Walter McCarty had 19 points and Ron Mercer 16 as Boston got its 16th victory, surpassing last season's win total.

Glenn Robinson, who had a season-high 42 points in a loss to the Chicago Bulls on Friday, led Milwaukee with 35 points.

Los Angeles Clippers, 97 Dallas Mavericks, 88: In Los Angeles, Lamond Murray and Brent Barry each scored 21 points as the Los Angeles Clippers handed the Dallas Mavericks their 15th straight loss.

Rookie Maurice Taylor scored 12 of his 15 points in the third quarter and grabbed nine rebounds for the Clippers, who have won three consecutive games for the first time since last April.

Michael Finley scored 21 points and Samaki Walker had a career-high 20 points for the Mavericks.

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16 POINTS FOR SLAM

Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ A J 2 7 5 4
♥ Void
♦ 9 6 4 3
♣ 6 4 2

WEST
♠ K
♥ Q 3
♦ A K J 10 8 2
♣ A 9 8 5

EAST
♠ 10
♥ K J 10 9 7 2
♦ Q 7 5
♣ J 7 3

SOUTH
♠ Q 9 6 3 2
♥ A 8 6 5 4
♦ Void
♣ K Q 10

The bidding:
SOUTH
1♠ 2♣ 3♦ 4♠
NORTH
Pass 5♣ 6♣
Pass 6♣
6♣

Opening lead: King of ♣

Conventional wisdom has it that 33 points are needed to contract for a small slam. That is usually the case when both hands are reasonably balanced. But when the deal is wildly distributional, throw all conventional wisdom out the window. This deal is from a match in the

Vanderbilt Team Championship at the recent Spring North American Championships in Philadelphia, when a team of Young Turks gave a veteran squad all it could handle.

When the veterans held the North-South cards, they bid their combined 16 high-card points to four spades, were doubled and were delighted to make the contract with two overtricks for a total score of 1190. That proved to be not quite enough.

The auction shown is by the young team, and needs considerable explanation. North's three-diamond cue-bid was forcing to game with spades as trumps — we might have been content with a leap to four spades, but why quarrel with success? Despite appearances, South's double of three hearts was not for penalties; it was a cue-bid promising first-round control.

Four spades by North was fast arrival, denying interest in anything beyond game. That might have ended matters had not East persisted with five diamonds. South's pass was a cue-bid showing first-round control and, when North cue-bid hearts in response, who could bid less than six spades with the South cards?

Manchester United crush Chelsea

LONDON (AFP) — A late three-goal salvo by Chelsea couldn't hide the gulf in class as Manchester United trounced the holders 5-3 in the FA Cup third round at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Premiership leaders United outplayed their hosts for three quarters of the match, with braces from David Beckham and Andy Cole and a fifth from Teddy Sheringham putting them 5-0 up after 74 minutes.

Chelsea's Graeme Le Saux hit a consolation for the Londoners before Italian substitute Gianluca Vialli struck twice late on to give the final scoreline a look that flattered Ruud Gullit's side.

United, coming in on the back of a hurtful Premiership defeat at Coventry last Saturday, outclassed Ruud Gullit's cosmopolitan Londoners with power, pace and commitment.

The breakthrough came in the 23rd minute when Cole raced onto Ryan Giggs' pass, shrugged off Frank Leboeuf and squared the ball back for Sheringham. His touch found Beckham who converted easily at the far post.

Five minutes later Beckham hit the second goal from a free-kick that Dutch goalkeeper Ed de Goeij should have saved.

Cole hit Chelsea with a third just seconds before the break. The striker escaped down the left onto Giggs' perfectly weighted through ball, ousting Steve Clarke and then holding off Leboeuf's last ditch challenge in the box to cut in and clip the ball over the helpless De Goeij.

Mark Hughes sent Gary Neville flying in the second half as Chelsea tried to respond, but their belligerence had no noticeable effect on United's resolve.

Norwegian Tore Andre Flo had been taken off to allow Vialli to come on and raise the spirits of the subdued home fans but they were quickly quelled again in the 65th minute when Cole outpaced Michael Duberry to beat De Goeij for 4-0.

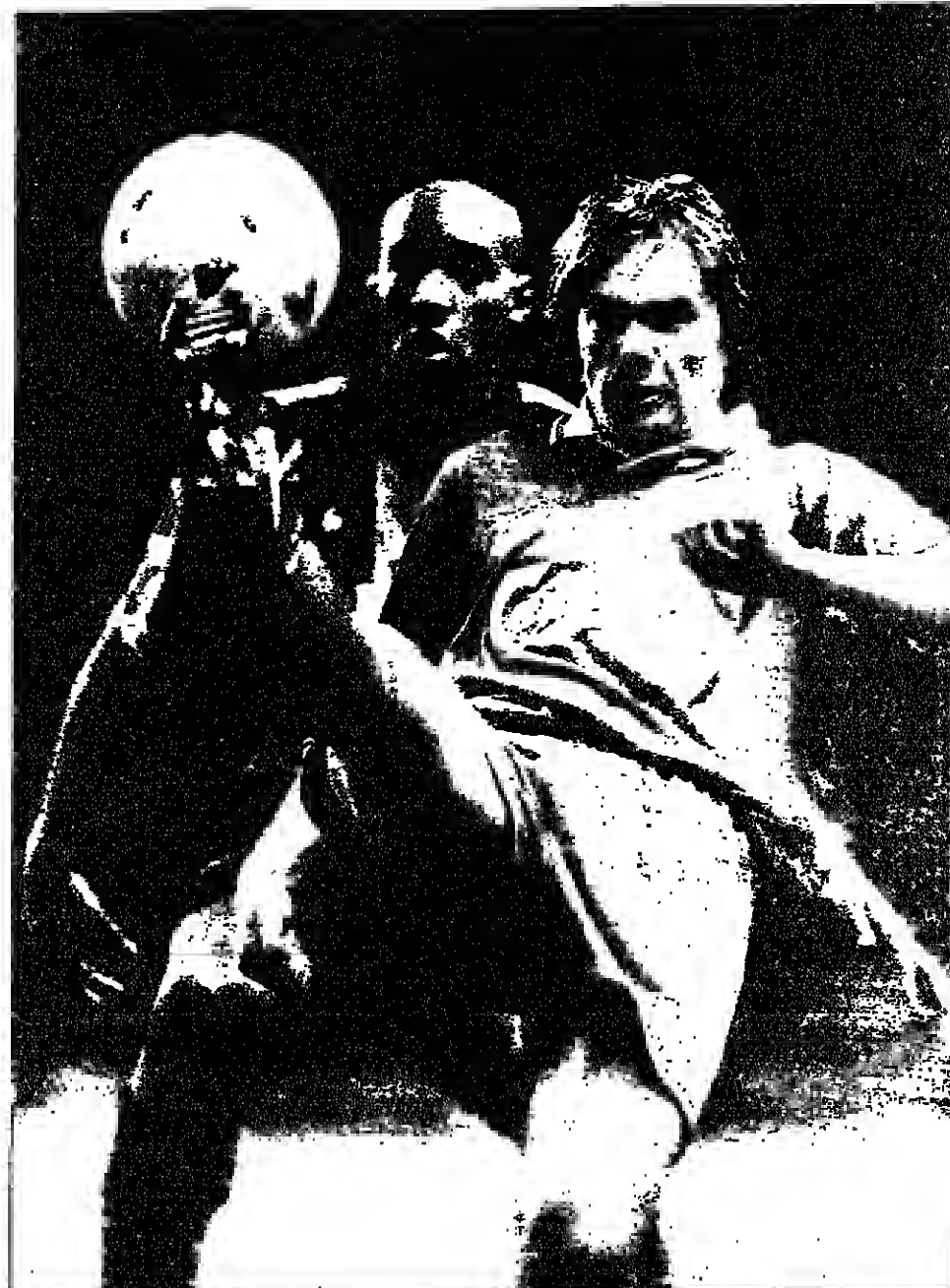
Sheringham then soared into the air to power home a header from Beckham's cross to make it 5-0 in the 74th minute before Chelsea recovered some pride.

Beckham's mistake just outside his own penalty area allowed Le Saux to chip neatly over Peter Schmeichel to make it 1-5.

Then, after De Goeij brilliantly tipped over Beckham's goalbound 25-yard free-kick two minutes later, Dan Petrescu's pass found the unmarked Vialli running free on the right to clip his shot beyond Schmeichel for 2-5.

Another blunder, this time by Gary Pallister, handed Vialli his second goal three minutes from the end.

Everton were playing host to Newcastle with Wrexham visiting Wimbledon in Sunday's later games.



Coventry City soccer captain Dion Dublin (L) tackles Liverpool player Jason McAteer (R). Coventry City beat Liverpool 3-1 in FA Cup third round game (Reuters photo)

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- Radisson SAS Hotel, tel. 607100
- Safeway, tel. 685311
- The National Music Conservatory, tel. 887620

Unhappy New Year for Real

MADRID (AFP) — Reigning Spanish champions Real Madrid had an unhappy start to the New Year when they slid to a 3-2 defeat at Beis in Seville on Saturday, their first away loss of the campaign.

The surprise loss left Real a point adrift of bitter rivals and league leaders Barcelona having played two games more than the Catalan club, who beat them at the Bernabeu in early November.

Barca can now go four points clear if they win at lowly Salamanca on Monday.

Third-placed Real Sociedad can close the gap on Real to four points if they beat midtable Mallorca.

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Israel accepts U.N. resolution on Lebanon if with security guarantees

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has accepted for the first time a U.N. resolution calling for its withdrawal from south Lebanon, but insists any pull-out must be accompanied by security guarantees, officials said Sunday.

An Israeli defence ministry spokesman said Israel's acceptance, voiced by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to a Lebanese weekly Friday, "is a political gesture aimed at better explaining our position."

Acceptance of the resolution "does not mean we are ready to make a unilateral withdrawal," he added.

Mr. Mordechai said in an interview with Lebanese weekly Al Watan Al Arabi that "Israel is ready to apply [U.N.] Security Council resolution 425."

But he added: "Security Council resolution 425 does not demand an unconditional IDF [Israeli Defence Force] withdrawal, and whoever reads it will see that it is a balanced solution."

"For the IDF to get out of Lebanon, peace and security have to be restored as [the resolution] states, and I know of only one way to do so: by halting terror and violence, preventing attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory, creating normalised, good relations on both sides of the border, and cooperation between the IDF and the Lebanese army."

Israel has occupied a self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon since 1985 to protect its northern territory from attacks by anti-Israeli guerrillas, notably the Hizbollah.

It has frequently linked its withdrawal to the Lebanese government ensuring that no attacks are launched from the territory against northern Israel. Yossi Beilin, a member of the opposition Labour Party who is campaigning for a withdrawal, described Mr. Mordechai's comments as "an important step," but criticised him for linking a pullout to security.

"The resolution speaks of an unconditional retreat," he said. The Security Council resolution adopted in March 1978 calls on Israel to "immediately cease military action against the integral territory of Lebanon and to withdraw its forces without delay from all Lebanese territory."

But Mr. Mordechai told the Lebanese weekly that he reads the resolution as having "two parts," since it was passed by the Security Council after Israel's invasion of Lebanon as far north as the Litani river.

"One cannot relate just to the first part of the resolution and ignore the second. The first part of Resolution 425 does call for an IDF withdrawal from territory it was in following the Litani Operation," he said.

"But further on it speaks of establishing UNIFIL [the U.N. peace monitoring force], whose purpose is 'restoring international peace and security and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the region.'"

Mr. Mordechai said without effective Lebanese government control in southern Lebanon, Israeli withdrawal was unlikely.

His interview comes at a time when public debate within Israel is intensifying over whether Israel should unilaterally withdraw because of mounting Israeli casualties in south Lebanon.

In 1997, 39 Israeli soldiers were killed in south Lebanon, the highest toll in 12 years, and more than 100 injured.

undersecretary, Riyadh Qaisi, said Baghdad "considers this incident as important and... we are going to get to the bottom of it."

He rejected any suggestions that Baghdad itself might be behind the attack.

"No country in the world can be immune from incidents like this... which could be committed for a variety of purposes from money to political ends," he said. "It is not in our interest to provoke any incident with UNSCOM."

Iraq and the U.N. are at loggerheads over Baghdad's refusal to allow UNSCOM to inspect presidential sites in search of banned weapons.

Although Mr. Halliday said two rocket-propelled grenades were fired at the building, another U.N. official spoke of a single weapon, saying: "An anti-tank projectile with no explosive was fired at the building... when it hit the wall it broke into two parts, one entered the cafeteria."

The headquarters house the offices of UNSCOM as well as humanitarian groups including the World Food Programme and the U.N. oil-for-food programme.

The unidentified Christian man, who was seized 10 days ago when he entered Israel from the United States, was ordered detained for a further 10 days by a court here on Sunday.

The court in the northern city of Acre also ordered that his name not be published, court officials said.

The engineer told police he had come to Israel to visit his wife's family.

But police accused him of violating state security by working for a Lebanese terrorist organisation whose identity was not disclosed.

Israeli police arrested Nov. 28 a German who allegedly planned to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel for the Lebanese militia Hizbollah, which is fighting to oust the Jewish state from south Lebanon. In April 1996, Hussein Makaded, a Hizbollah agent with a false British passport, was severely injured when the bomb he was preparing blew up in his face in a Jerusalem hotel room.

He said Sunday dismissed reports that thousands of Kurds were lining up to flee the country for Europe as "propaganda" put about by exiled Kurdish rebel groups.

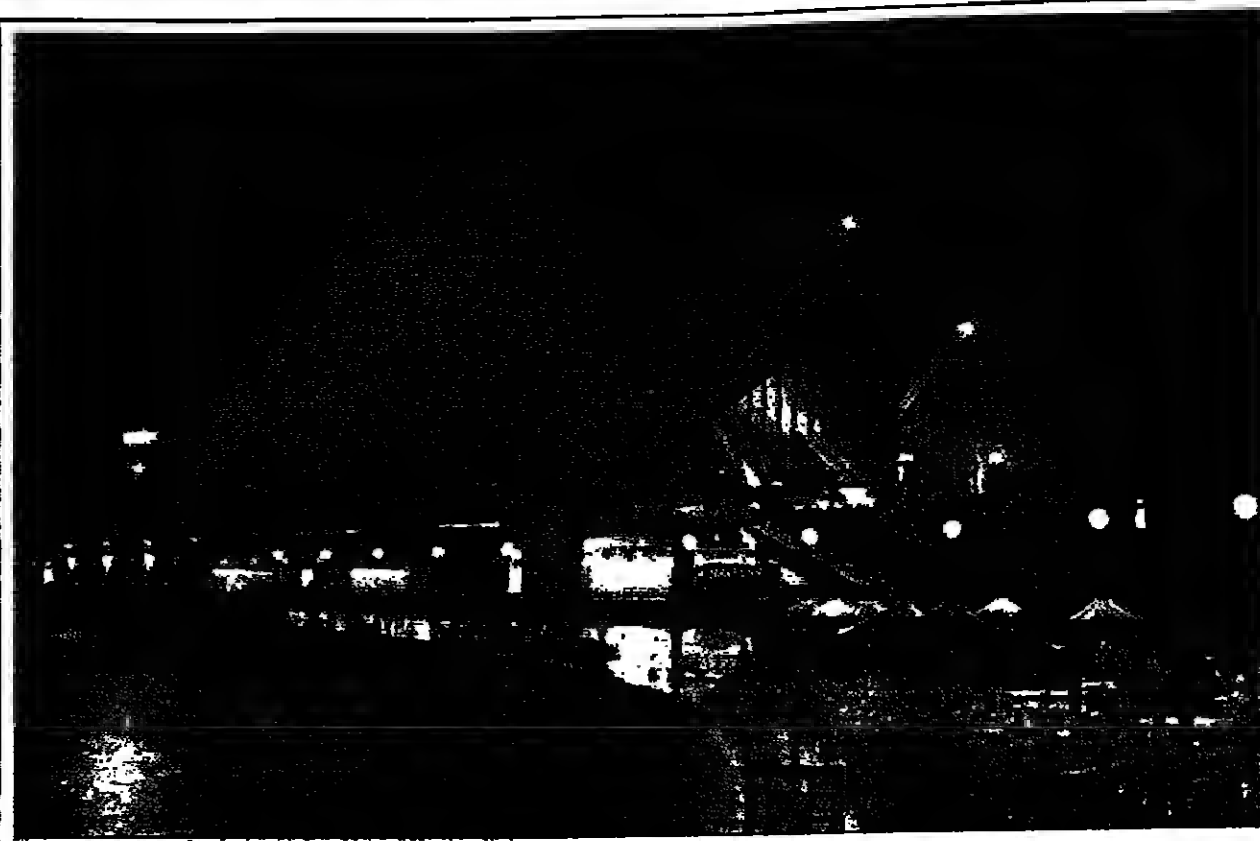
The Kurdistan National Liberation Front recently warned in Rome that a "biblical exodus" of Kurds was in preparation and that at least 20,000 were ready to

leave, a figure it said "could increase tenfold."

"This is nothing but anti-Turkish propaganda orchestrated by Kurdish separatist groups," said the Turkish official who declined to be identified.

However, not all reports of a mass exodus have come from Kurdish sources.

In Germany, Bavarian border police chief Gerbard Hoppe said Saturday that



BATHED IN BLUE, DOWN UNDER: Sydney's opera house is bathed in blue light for the start of the 1998 Sydney Festival. At a cost of 160,000 Australian dollars, 30 high-intensity lights designed for day/night cricket will light the opera house until the end of the festival, Jan. 26 (AFP photo)

Germany demands EU action on Algeria

BONN (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel called Sunday for urgent European Union action to respond to the continuing bloodshed in Algeria.

"It is possible to imagine an EU troika visit [to Algeria] on the political level to propose to the Algerian government cooperation in the struggle against terrorism... and aid to victims of terror," Mr. Kinkel said in a statement.

Mr. Kinkel also said he wanted to put the issue on the agenda of the next EU foreign ministers' meeting, and to press Arab counterparts to do what they can do halt the bloodletting.

The international community, he said, cannot remain "silent and impotent" in the face of "fanatical acts" even if it is difficult to assist Algeria from abroad.

The EU troika comprises the present, past and future six-month chair nations of the 15-nation union — Britain, Luxembourg and Austria.

More than 80,000 people have died, according to an Amnesty International esti-

Witnesses, survivors of massacre appear on Algerian television

ALGIERS (AFP) — Witnesses and survivors of Algeria's worst reported massacre in six years of conflict between the government and armed Islamists, appeared on national television Saturday night.

Victims, including a nine-month-old baby with head injuries, were pictured in hospital in the western town of Relizane, in the region where the atrocities occurred overnight Tuesday.

One injured man said he saw the attackers slit the throats of his wife and seven children.

Some victims were said to have been killed with pick-axes.

People from the villages attacked said they recognised some of their assailants as coming from the region.

Others asked the authorities to provide villagers with weapons so they could defend themselves.

The French-language daily Liberte put the death toll at 412, the biggest slaughter since Islamists took up arms against the army-backed secular regime in 1992.

Official reports said 78 were killed. More than 750 people have died over the past ten days in a series of massacres, mainly in the west of the country, according to partial tolls given in the press.

mate, since an Islamist insurgency broke out in the north African state in 1992.

Algeria is a major source of oil and gas for Europe, but its leadership resents outside interference in a conflict that it regards as being under control.

Mr. Kinkel's appeal was issued after the worst known massacre since the insurgency began, with more than 400

reported killed in the western region of Relizane last week.

Mr. Kinkel called upon the Algerian government "to seek dialogue with all acceptable Islamist forces," but stressed that diplomatic steps did not entail meddling in domestic Algerian affairs.

The leadership of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is based in Germany. In a state-

ment issued in Bonn, the FIS called the Relizane slaughter a "crime against humanity."

Mr. Kinkel said: "The German government condemns in the strongest terms these terrorist crimes, which are in flagrant contradiction to the teachings of Islam."

"The sufferings of the Algerian people must end," he added.

Israel arrests Arab-American

ACRE (AFP) — A Lebanese-American has been arrested in Israel accused of violating state security for allegedly operating with a Lebanese terrorist group, police said Sunday.

The unidentified Christian man, who was seized 10 days ago when he entered Israel from the United States, was ordered detained for a further 10 days by a court here on Sunday.

The court in the northern city of Acre also ordered that his name not be published, court officials said.

The engineer told police he had come to Israel to visit his wife's family.

But police accused him of violating state security by working for a Lebanese terrorist organisation whose identity was not disclosed.

Israeli police arrested Nov. 28 a German who allegedly planned to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel for the Lebanese militia Hizbollah, which is fighting to oust the Jewish state from south Lebanon. In April 1996, Hussein Makaded, a Hizbollah agent with a false British passport, was severely injured when the bomb he was preparing blew up in his face in a Jerusalem hotel room.

Sunni Muslim leader under fire for meeting Israeli chief rabbi

CAIRO (AFP) — The spiritual leader of Sunni Muslims has been urged to step down or face a trial amid a virulent protest over his historic meeting with Israel's chief rabbi.

Sheikh Muhammad Seyyed Tantawi of Al Azhar, the supreme religious authority in Sunni Islam, sparked fury when he held an unprecedented meeting in Cairo on Dec. 15 with Rabbi Israel Lau.

United by their staunch opposition to any step which may consecrate "normalisation" with Israel, conservative ulemas (theologians) at Al Azhar have joined forces with Egypt's opposition press to condemn Sheikh Tantawi.

The meeting "with a representative of the enemy which occupied Arab land weakens Muslims and reinforces Jews," the conservative Front of Ulemas of Al Azhar, said in a statement last week.

Anti-Israeli lawyer Nabil Al Wahsh, meanwhile, sent a letter to Sheikh Tantawi urging him to resign within 15 days or he would file a lawsuit against the Muslim leader "on behalf of the Egyptian people." Egypt and Israel have been linked by a peace treaty since 1979 but relations between the two neighbours have soured over the deadlock in the Middle

East peace process, with Cairo blaming Israel for the stalemate.

Sheikh Tantawi has "gravely offended the homeland, [Muslim] religion and even Al Azhar which is known for its decades-long struggle against occupation" by Israel of Arab land, said the independent weekly Al Osboh.

"Shame on Islam. Shame on Al Azhar and shame on the sheikh himself," the opposition Al Arabi weekly newspaper said in a front-page banner headline.

Bi-weekly Islamic paper Al Shaab urged action against Sheikh Tantawi. "It is no longer acceptable to keep quiet over [the behaviour of] Sheikh Tantawi," it said in a commentary last week.

Al Shaab also hailed the head of the Christian Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III, who systematically refuses to meet any Jewish religious leaders.

The independent weekly Al Dastur suggested that in future the head of Al Azhar should be elected rather than appointed for life. Sheikh Tantawi was named by the government in 1996 when his predecessor died.

Dia Raswan, an expert in political affairs at the Al Ahran Research Centre, voiced surprise over the out-

cry.

"Sheikh Tantawi met Jewish rabbis in the United States four years ago and nobody protested," Mr. Rashwan told AFP.

"But the timing of this meeting was wrong and coincided with a heated debate in Egypt between opponents and partisans of Arab-Israeli normalisation."

The controversy deepened in January 1997 when Egyptian intellectuals joined forces with Western, Arab and Israeli supporters of the creation of an Arab-Israeli alliance to help back peace efforts.

Sheikh Tantawi, 69, struck back by granting numerous newspaper and television interviews during which he stressed that his meeting with Rabbi Lau was "merely a meeting between men of religion to discuss religious issues."

The encounter was not politically-motivated and certainly did not seek to consolidate "normalisation" efforts, Sheikh Tantawi repeated in each interview.

Egyptian government officials have kept silent on the issue, prompting the government weekly Akhbar Al Yom newspaper to accuse them of "passivity."

Sharif, Shahine to join Quinn at Iran film festival

TEHRAN (AFP) — Egypt's star actor and top director, Omar Sharif and Youssef Shahine, have joined veteran U.S. actor Anthony Quinn on the list of guests for Iran's film festival next month. Bahman Ghobadi-Lou, an Iranian director living in the U.S., is preparing for the visit by the three celebrities to the "Fajr" film festival, Akhbar newspaper said Sunday. The festival will screen 14 movies featuring Quinn in a tribute to the 82-year-old Mexican-born actor who is very popular in the Islamic republic.

Murdoch, Hope, Disney, Montalban made papal knights

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bob Hope, Rupert Murdoch, Roy Disney and Ricardo Montalban have been awarded papal knighthoods by Pope John Paul II, the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Los Angeles announced.

The comedian, the news magnate, the entertainment executive and the actor are among 67 men and women in the Los Angeles area being honoured as knights or dames in the papal Order of St. Gregory. The Pope gives the honorary title to people of "unblemished character," including non-Catholics, who have "promoted the interests of society, the Catholic church and the Holy See," said the Rev. Gregory Coiro, spokesman for the archdiocese.

Hunt "faked it to the press" over Schwarzenegger film

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Diminutive actress Linda Hunt, who won an Oscar for her portrayal of a man in "The Year of Living Dangerously," says that one of her biggest mistakes was taking on Arnold Schwarzenegger in the film "Kindergarten Cop."

"I was so disappointed in that movie. I spent so many hours on the set doing nothing. It seemed like such a waste of time," said Hunt. "I like Arnold, he's a sweet heart, but I was bored, and when I was asked to talk about it to the press I got nervous because I didn't know what to say, so I faked it for all these years and kept quiet until now."

Woody Allen distances himself from Harry in new movie

NEW YORK (AFP) — Actor-director Woody Allen is fed up with people who confuse him with the lead character of his new film, "Deconstructing Harry."

In the new film, Allen himself plays Harry Block, a neurotic obsessive writer. "People confuse the details of Harry's life with my life, when I'm nothing like Harry," Allen told the New York Times. "I don't drink to excess or take pills, like Harry. I've never had the nerve or craziness to kidnap my son, like Harry," he said.

But he can relate to Block: "Harry's philosophy speaks to me — I feel the same way he feels about women, about science, about philosophy, religion and art."

Actress Tilly loved nude scenes with Madsen

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The high-pitched actress who was a supporting actress Academy Award nominee, Jennifer Tilly, says she loves doing nude scenes. "I loved doing a nude scene with Michael Madsen in 'The Getaway' and I was really nervous at first because on my first day on the set they said, Jennifer meet Michael, now take off your clothes. At first, it was scary, but you know there's something very freeing about taking your clothes off in front of 50 people."

Jordan Times

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Turkey denies reports of Kurdish exodus

ANKARA (AFP) — A Turkish government official on Sunday dismissed reports that thousands of Kurds were lining up to flee the country for Europe as "propaganda" put about by exiled Kurdish rebel groups.

The Kurdistan National Liberation Front recently warned in Rome that a "biblical exodus" of Kurds was in preparation and that at least 20,000 were ready to

leave, a figure it said "could increase tenfold."

"This is nothing but anti-Turkish propaganda orchestrated by Kurdish separatist groups," said the Turkish official who declined to be identified.

However, not all reports of a mass exodus have come from Kurdish sources.

In Germany, Bavarian border police chief Gerbard Hoppe said Saturday that

some 10,000 Kurds were preparing to set sail from Turkey to Italy in 20 vessels. Two boats carrying more than 1,200 illegal immigrants have landed on southern Italy's shores in the last eight days. Most of them were Kurds fleeing years of conflict in Turkey's southeast which has pitted government forces against Kurdish separatists.

The Turkish official

accused Kurdish groups of organising the departure of the illegal immigrants so as to embarrass Ankara within the international community.

He called for greater cooperation with European states to resolve the problem.

Turkey's Kurdish population is estimated at between eight and 15 million.